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ADVENTURES



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Flat-out in Porsche's purest coupe

VANTAGE GT12

The Aston we've been waiting for?

AVENTADOR SV

Lamborghini's V12 on the Isle of Man

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NEW EVO MARKET

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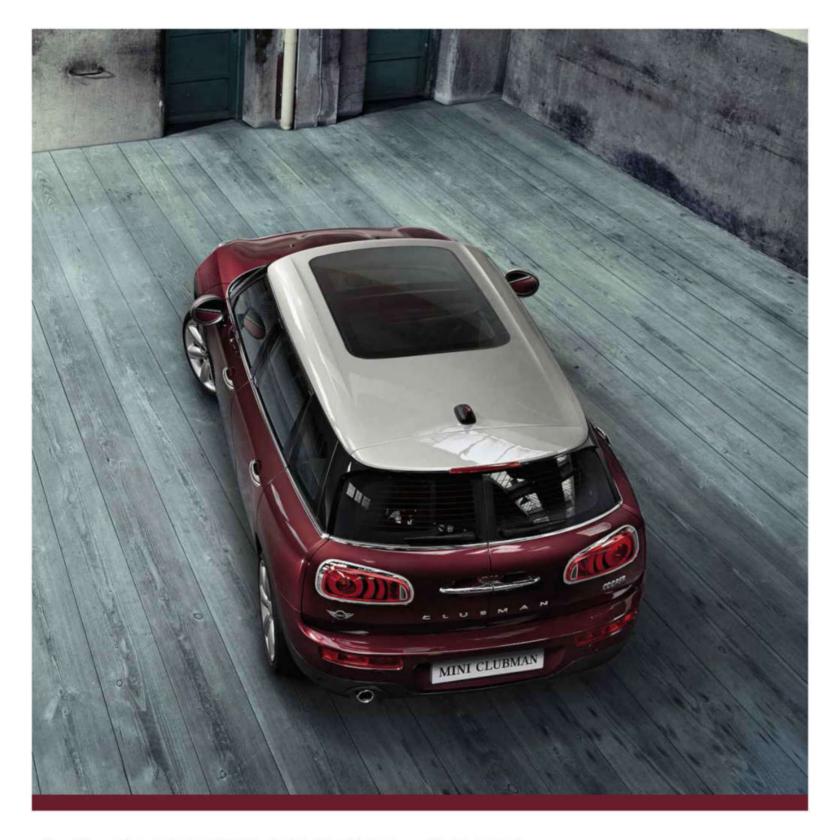
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Ed Speak



TWENTY-FOUR

cylinders, 1332bhp, 970lb ft, 12.433cc and £571.723. No. these are not the raw numbers for the upcoming Bugatti

Veyron replacement (set to be revealed at this month's Frankfurt motor show - keep an eye on evo.co.uk on September 15). Rather they are the combined totals for Lamborghini's Aventador Superveloce and the Aston Martin GT12, both of which, we've discovered, make the UK feel incredibly small. They tackle our fastest roads in this month's issue of evo.

In a world where even Porsche has to bite the bullet by laying its naturally aspirated flat-six to rest and replacing it with a smaller, turbocharged engine, Lamborghini and Aston continue to unashamedly celebrate bigcapacity, dozen-cylinder motoring.

Admittedly, the latter will soon be slipping Mercedes-AMG's twin-turbocharged 4-litre

'Lamborghini and Aston continue to unashamedly celebrate big-capacity, dozen-cylinder motoring'

V8 into its next generation of cars, but while the opportunity is here we should celebrate its glorious, thunderous and intoxicating 12-cylinder engine. And Lamborghini? If you ever see an Aventador SV parked up, go and grab yourself a coffee then wait for the owner to return so you can hear the angriest, most violent engine shatter the peace and scare the life out of the hairs on the back of your neck.

Thankfully, Lamborghini claims it won't have to downsize and pick up the phone to the likes of Garrett or IHI, and that its howling V12 is here to stay, which is music to my years. Yours too, I hope.

evo Worldwide EDITORS-IN-CHIEF



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'It is probably the greatest soundtrack on sale today'

LAMBORGHINI AVENTADOR SV p070



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BMW

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Ambition

Explore

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Mercedes-**AMG** C63 Coupe

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

T'M NO COOK. JUST ASK THE attendees at the infamous Catchpole soirée of June 2007, or at least those that are still alive. However, to me the recipe for the new Mercedes-AMG C63 Coupe looks something like this. Take a large helping (it's these sorts of accurate measurements that saw my stroganoff become a bolognese) of AMG GT and pop it in the blender with a chunk of S-class Coupe. Whizz it up a bit then leave to stand before adding a wet sump and serve with a reduced price. Et voilà. To turn it into an S, just add a pinch of curry powder at the blending stage.

As you can see from evo's exclusive photos, the new C63 Coupe is a very sleek-looking car indeed. Much softer of edge, it is in some ways less aggressive than the previous, W204-generation car, but it's also rather more elegant. The bonnet is 60mm longer than on non-AMG C-class Coupes and gets two 'power domes'. The arches are also slightly wider, although we think the hind arches could have been wider still. At the rear there is a small but exquisitely formed lip on the bootlid and a diffuser framing the exhaust tips.

We were all worried about the demise of the beloved 6.2-litre naturally aspirated V8 that resided under the bonnet of the previous C63. It had such character and sounded so glorious that it was feared whatever came next would never be able to compete on that important emotional level, particularly if it was emotional level, particularly if it was turbocharged. However, the M177 engine, with its 'hot V', fantastic throttle response and gutturally gargling soundtrack, is already becoming one of the greats.

Whether in standard or S form,

the power and torque figures for the new coupe are identical to those of the saloon and estate that launched this time last year. However, the acceleration times are slightly quicker thanks to the way the coupe's power is deployed to the road. The rear track has been increased by 25mm and rear tyre width is up from 265mm to 285. Meanwhile, the rear axle ratio has also been shortened. You might assume that the coupe would be lighter too, but at 1645kg it is actually 5kg heavier than the saloon.

Although the same four-link front

and multi-link rear architecture has been retained for the suspension, AMG has redesigned it for the coupe and the overall setup is said to be firmer. There are new steering knuckles and the front tyres have spread to 255mm in width - up by 10mm - so there are hopes that a little more steering feel might have crept in. Overall there seems to be a more focused demeanour to the C63 Coupe, which should hopefully help

SPECIFICATION (S IN BRACKETS)

Engine

V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo 469bhp @ 5500-

Power

6250rpm (503)

Torque

479lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm (516)

0-62mph Top speed 4.0sec (3.9) (claimed) 155mph (limited; 180mph with Driver's Package)

Weight

Power-to-weight

Basic price

On sale



Only the doors, roof and bootlid are shared with the standard C-class Coupe. Nonetheless, the similarities with the larger S-class Coupe (launched in 2014) remain obvious. As with the saloon, we would have liked slightly more swollen rear arches.

As well as a greater width to the front track and those wider front tyres, the C63 Coupe also gets modelspecific steering knuckles. Turn-in should benefit from these changes and we're hoping for an improvement in steering feel.

The 4-litre engine is mated to AMG's Speedshift MCT seven-speed gearbox. Despite MCT standing for 'Multi-Clutch Technology', this is not a dual-clutch 'box like the BMW M4's DCT. It's an auto 'box with a wet clutch instead of a torque converter, and is now very impressive in both its responses and shift times.

O DYNAMIC ENGINE MOUNTS

In hard cornering and braking you want engine mounts to be as rigid as possible to help keep the mass of the engine in check. However, in general driving you want soft mounts to reduce NVH. The C63 S's adaptive mounts instantly vary their stiffness according to the conditions.



mm

mm



1 LSDs

As with the saloon and estate, the coupe comes with a mechanical limited-slip differential as standard. The S version gets an electronically actuated limited-slip differential, which in our experience successfully smoothes the transition from grip to slip and back again.

INTERIOR

places to be and the new C63 Coupe looks as though it will be no exception. The standard seats are trimmed in man-made 'Artico' leather and 'Dinamica' microfibre. Optional, heavily bolstered Performance seats will offer a lower driving position.



RIVAL BMW M4



The battle between BMW and Mercedes looks tantalisingly close. On paper the more powerful AMG has the edge, but its weight might play against it on the road. BMW also generally produces slightly more focused chassis and suspension setups (see M3 v C63 S Saloon in evo 211). It will be interesting to see if the suspension tweaks revealed for the coupe address this.

Engine Power Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight Power to weight Basic price

In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo 425bhp @ 5500-7300rpm 406lb ft @ 1850-5500rpm 4.3sec (4.1 with DCT) 155mph (limited) 1537kg (with DCT) 281bhp/ton £57,055

WHEELS AND TYRES



Ten-spoke 18in alloys on the C63 Five-twin-spoke 19in alloys on C63 S

Tyres will be 255-section at the front and 285 at the back on both. Only the profile and diameter differ

BMW M4 GTS Concept

Hot M division coupe to follow on from the 193mph E92 M3 GTS

MW'S M DIVISION revealed an M4 GTS concept at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in August. Based on the 425bhp, twin-turbocharged M4, the GTS follows in the tyre tracks of previous Munich special-edition M models, such as the very orange E92 M3 GTS of 2010 and the stealthy E90 M3 CRT saloon of 2012. This concept is also a lightweight, track-focused road car, with a production version scheduled to go on sale in 2016.

The orange-highlighted concept showcases new technology, including the water injection system first seen on the M4 MotoGP Safety Car. The

system works by injecting a fine spray of water into the plenums of the intake manifold. When the water vaporises, the intake air is cooled and as a result the final compression temperature in the combustion chamber is reduced. This decreases the engine's tendency to 'knock' and also allows for greater boost pressure (see Radar, evo 210, for a detailed explanation).

Going further to ensure optimal operating temperatures across the board, BMW M has also developed a more effective cooling system for the in-line six. Alongside a main radiator are now additional radiators for the engine's high- and low-temperature

66 The GTS uses the same water injection tech as the **M4 MotoGP** Safety Car >>

1 ENGINE

Retaining the standard M4's 3-litre twin-turbocharged straight-six, the addition of on the MotoGP safety car - and an increase in boost pressure should see hikes ten per cent.

2 CHASSIS

The standard M4's adaptive M Sport suspension (with switchable dampers) will GTS, albeit recalibrated for the car's lighter weight and improved aero. Expect carbon-ceramic brakes to be standard.

AERO

BMW M has given lots of attention to optimising the M4's aerodynamic performance for the GTS. This has been achieved with a carbonfibre front



circuits, transmission and turbochargers. The aim is to maintain consistent temperatures, and to that end the turbochargers are also cooled with an indirect intercooler and individual water pump.

BMW's engineers have focused on developing a road car that's optimised for the track. As such, the carbonfibre front splitter and rear wing are both manually adjustable and the bonnet is also made from carbonfibre to help reduce the standard M4's 1497kg kerb weight. There's a wider front air intake to optimise airflow and minimise front axle lift.

As well as the M4 GTS concept's

obvious aerodynamic additions, the car also features OLED (organic lightemitting diode) rear lights. BMW says the technology creates 'full-surface and homogenous illumination', as opposed to the single point of light you get with a regular LED. BMW is expecting to use OLED technology throughout its model range over the coming years.

Expect a production version of the M4 GTS to be in showrooms by spring 2016. Given that the M3 GTS was nudging £115,000 when it was on sale in 2010, expect this new trackday toy to cost no less than £125,000. We anticipate a riposte from Mercedes.



SPECIFICATION

Engine Power

Torque

Straight-six, 2979cc, twin-turbo Top speed

0-62mph 4.0sec (est)

465bhp+ (est) 450lb ft+ (est)

Weight Basic price On sale

190mph (est) 1440kg (est) £125.000 (est)

Spring 2016

POWER

Water injection liberates extra horsepower...

TORQUE

...and torque from the twin-turbocharged in-line six





RIVAL

Porsche Cavman GT4

Sublime balance from a full Porsche Motorsportdepartment Cayman

Jaguar SUV squares up to Porsche

New F-pace aims for Stuttgart's wildly successful Macan HEREAS BENTLEY'S new Bentayga SUV (opposite) will be the *only* off-roader to occupy the production line at Crewe for the foreseeable future, Jaguar's new F-pace is just the beginning of the Solihull concern's foray into the world of the SUV.

Making its global debut at September's Frankfurt motor show, the F-pace is Jaguar's answer to BMW's X3, Audi's Q5 and, from Mercedes' almost unfathomable new range of pseudo-coupe-SUVs, the GLC. There is also, of course, sister-company Land Rover's Evoque and top-end Discovery Sport models, but above all it is Porsche's Macan that Jaguar's first compact SUV will fight against the hardest.

Based on the new XE's aluminiumintensive platform, the F-pace will be built alongside the saloon at Jaguar's heavily revamped Solihull plant near Birmingham. As well as its platform, the F-pace will share the XE's doublewishbone front and multi-link rear suspension, interior switchgear and InControl infotainment system.

Power will also come courtesy of the XE, with a range of four- and sixcylinder petrol and diesel engines to be offered with an eight-speed ZF automatic gearbox. The entry points – and biggest sellers – will be the 2-litre turbocharged petrol and diesel engines from Jaguar's new Ingenium range, with a 3-litre supercharged V6 petrol engine topping the range at the car's launch. Later in the F-pace's life, Jaguar will shoehorn in its 5-litre supercharged V8 engine to create a model sold under the SVR performance sub-brand.

As you would expect, Jaguar's diversification into the SUV market won't stop at this initial model. The company sold just 81,570 cars in 2014 (Porsche sold 189.850 cars during the same period) and if it's to compete on a global scale it needs to build models customers want to buy. Unfortunately for the purists, that means SUVs, and many of them at that. During the next decade expect Jaguar's SUV range to expand to include contenders in every big volume sector. Additional models will come in the form of everything from a rival to BMW's X1 through to a Porsche Cavenne fighter.

While we continue to celebrate the XE and XF saloons – and the F-type coupe and roadster – Jaguar needs drivers to buy the F-pace and its offspring with enthusiasm.

SOLIHULL TAKES ON STUTTGART

Jaguar is a long way from competing with the all-conquering volume German sellers, but it can look closely at what Porsche has achieved in the 13 years since it launched the Cayenne.

In 2001, the year before the Cayenne was launched, Porsche sold 54,234 cars. A decade later it sold 59,897 Cayennes alone in a calendar year. What Jaguar wouldn't give for such an upturn in sales.

The key to Porsche's success is that it has continued to build sports cars as it has evolved into an SUV manufacturer (although the last new sports car model launched was the Cayman in 2006). It has also continued to deliver special models such as the GT3 and 918 Spyder. A healthy motorsport presence hasn't hurt it, either.

If Jaguar's SUV plan is to work, the company's bosses can't forget its core customers and what Jaguar means to the buying public. Sports cars must remain at the firm's heart.



by STUART GALLAGHER



New model is Crewe's first SUV; 600bhp W12 at launch and a diesel to follow

ND SO BENTLEY TOO falls for the lure of the SUV coin and builds a car that few would associate with the brand. A brand, remember, that prides itself on being the epitome of luxury and performance.

Are we too harshly judging Bentley's decision to launch the Bentayga, seen here for the first time ahead of its global debut at the Frankfurt motor show? Perhaps. The luxury SUV market is a lucrative one, and one that Range Rover has dominated despite the advances of Porsche, BMW, Mercedes, Audi and Lexus, but now Bentley is upping the ante with what it calls the fastest, most powerful, most luxurious and most exclusive SUV in the world. That's a bold claim, wouldn't you say? A Cayenne Turbo S will top 175mph and dip well below five seconds on its way to 60mph, after all.

A couple of Bentley's claims are backed up by an all-new W12 TSI engine: the 6-litre twin-turbo unit produces 600bhp at 6000rpm and 664lb ft from 1250 through to 4500rpm. It's a mighty motor that uses both direct and indirect fuel injection systems as well as cylinder-on-demand technology to improve efficiency. Eventually it will be joined by a highperformance diesel and a plug-in hybrid.

A ZF eight-speed automatic gearbox is standard and features a coasting function that allows drive to be disengaged off-throttle so that the SUV 'sails', saving a few more drops superunleaded. Off-roading capabilities are permitted by a permanent four-wheel-drive system featuring a Torsen centre diff.

The Bentayga's chassis consists of multi-link front and rear suspension, with Bentley's new 'Dynamic Ride' active roll control technology linked to the car's driving modes to provide a myriad of ride settings. Self-levelling air suspension with continuous damping control will also be standard.

Bentley claims the Bentayga's cabin will lead the way for luxury and opulence - a claim that's hard to deny. Three seat configurations will be offered – four, five and seven – but we can't see the interior being one you could easily hose down after a day of green-laning.

Bentley's move into the SUV market was only a matter of time. Chinese and Russian buyers can't get enough of these beasts – just look at JLR's profits - and the US has an equally insatiable appetite. However, with Range Rover so well established and a Rolls-Royce SUV on its way, Bentley's Bentayga isn't going to have it all its own way.



Above: Bentley promises the very highest standards of luxury in the Bentayga; three rear-seat options wil be offered: four, five or seven.

The Bentayga's kerb weight, some 220kg more than a supercharged Range Rover

Power-to-weight ratio for the 6-litre twin-turbo W12 SUV

The surprising 0-60mph time for the Bentayga

Top speed. Hats off to Bentley's test driver

The length of the Bentayga. That's longer than an S-class

by DAN PROSSER

Cut-price Mégane Cup

Our favourite hot hatch gets even more tempting

R ENAULT HAS ANNOUNCED two new versions of the Mégane Renaultsport for the 2016 model year, broadening the hot hatch's appeal in the process.

The 275 Cup-S features the same chassis setup that makes the Trophy model a class-leading drive, only with an entry-level price tag. At £23,935 it undercuts the Trophy by some £4995, despite using the same 271bhp 2-litre engine, suspension components, limited-slip differential, Bridgestone RE050A tyres and Brembo brakes. Curiously, the claimed 0-62mph time for the Cup-S is 0.2sec behind the Trophy's, at 6.0sec, while the top speed is 1mph slower, at 158mph.

Like the Trophy, the Cup-S car be further honed for track use by specifying adjustable Öhlins dampers (£2000) and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres – the same hardware that underpinned the stripped-out Trophy-R model that set a recordbreaking Nürburgring lap time.

The other new model is the 275 Nav, which costs £25,935 and majors on day-to-day usability rather than outright performance. It uses the more compliant 'Sport' chassis, matched with Dunlop Sport Maxx tyres—although the Cup Chassis Pack can be added for £1350.

The 275 Nav's additional features over the Cup-S include automatic lights and wipers, leather upholstery, dual-zone climate control, a reversing camera and – you guessed it – satnav. Both cars are available to order now with deliveries due to start in November.

6.0sec

The time taken for the 275 Cup-S to hit 62mph

£4995

The 275 Cup-S represents a significant saving over the Mégane Trophy

4kg

Weight saved by the optiona Akrapovic exhaust (£2500)



N

The name of Hyundai's new high-performance sub-brand

1:16.0

The lap time set by Aston Martin's Vantage GT12 at Anglesey Circuit. Watch the film at youtube.com/evoty

'2&4'

Honda's new track car, which combines motorbike and sports car know-how

\$13.75m

The winning bid for an LM-spec McLaren F1 at last month's Monterey auction

60%

The percentage of UK customers that have ordered their Ford Mustang with a manual gearbox

Dawn breaks for new Rolls-Royce



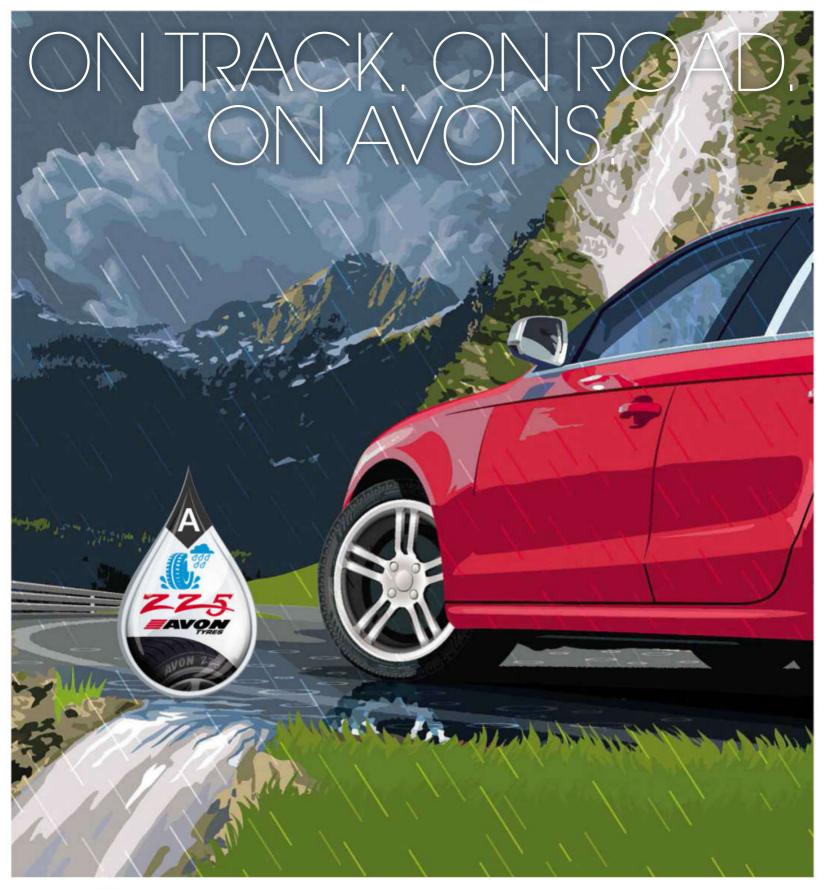
Rolls-Royce has confirmed that the drop-top version of the Wraith will be called 'Dawn', reviving a name last used in the 1950s. It will be the second roofless model in Rolls-Royce's line-up – the other being the Phantom Drophead Coupe – when it arrives early in 2016.

Sharing its underpinnings with the Wraith coupe, as

well as its 624bhp twin-turbo 6.6-litre V12 engine, the Dawn will offer more rear legroom than other luxury four-seater convertibles.

'The idea of creating a car like Dawn that can be used in comfort by only two adults on a day-to-day basis is anathema,' says Giles Taylor, director of design. 'In creating Dawn we have accepted no compromise to the comfort and luxury of four adults who want to travel together.'

Some 80 per cent of the Dawn's exterior body panels are new, while the fabric roof is said to be one of the new model's engineering highlights. Prices are expected to start at around £250,000.

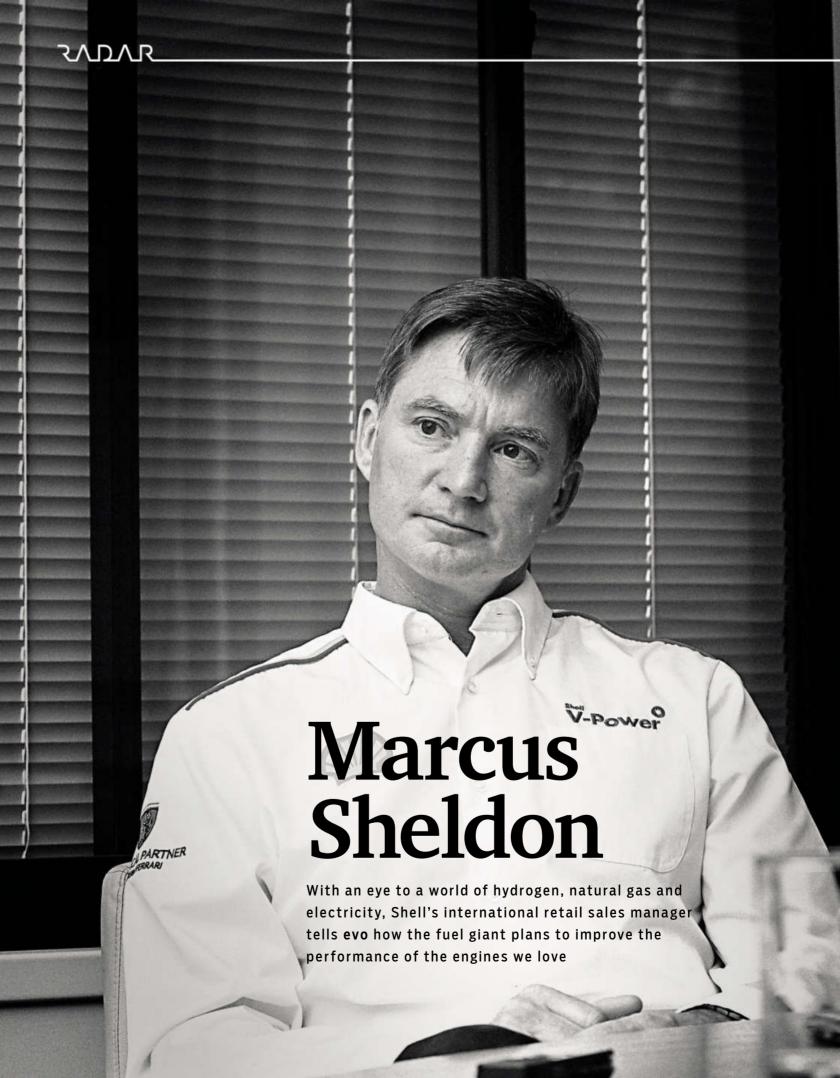




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S A COMPANY, SHELL WANTS to be considered the leading supplier of quality fuels and the number one retailer to deliver them. In order to achieve our goals we need to build on what we are already doing, learn from our current strategy and, most importantly, listen to our customers and push ourselves to deliver above their expectations.

'The biggest challenges facing us are coming from a number of angles. There are the political, social, consumer and environmental pressures you'd expect an oil company to face. These are very public challenges and it's how we deal with them that we are measured against, as much as we are when it comes down to how well our fuels perform. For some, it's not enough that we are continually developing cleaner burning and more efficient fuels, and it's down to Shell as a company to prove it is going that extra mile to be socially and politically responsible.

'In the development of tomorrow's fuels we need to lead innovation. That's one of our key ambitions: to be at the forefront of fuel development. V-Power Nitro+ was launched in 2013, but our scientists would have been working towards the finished product for anything up to a decade, and during that time formulae, additives and refining processes would have continuously evolved, so our scientists and engineers across all levels not only have to work towards improving products, but also to make sure we are utilising the latest innovations.

'Even if we think the finished product is the best we can offer the day it's launched in terms of cleaning a car's engine, preventing the build up of gunk and delivering the greatest performance and efficiency that's possible, the development will never stop.

'As for the car manufacturers we work with, we can't stop when the new product is launched and take a break. The biggest challenge starts the day the new product reaches the market, because that's when we sit down and ask ourselves, how can we improve it?

'We work very closely with OE manufacturers and companies such as Ferrari and more recently BMW M. The latter now recommends our fuels for its products. With Ferrari we have a strong

We currently have 50 engineers working with Ferrari to develop fuels 🥍

working relationship and take all the information, data and analysis gained on track to filter through to our roadcar fuels. It's not always straightforward because the demands and requirements of motorsport are very different to those of our customers on one of our forecourts. but it does allow us to accelerate some of the development time. We currently have 50 engineers spending time working with Ferrari to develop fuels. While this sounds like a vast undertaking, it will only result in small steps in the development of a fuel. All our innovations are small steps.

'We are working more closely with OEM's than ever before to be able to develop fuels that match the performance and efficiency targets of the next generation of engines. Obviously this means we have to make better fuels to enable these cars to realise the expected level of performance from their engines.

'To this end, a fuel such as V-Power Nitro+ will evolve - it has to - but we also have to tweak our other lubricants, such as oil, in order for the OEM's engine to reach the required levels of performance

'One of our biggest challenges is finding out where the next level of innovation is. Our performance fuels have a market share of between 20 and 25 per cent, but we need to increase this without sacrificing quality or performance and still be able to offer them at a price that customers are willing to pay.

'We also want our fuels to be seen as the leading premium fuels and we need to provide a service to customers that reflects the quality we feel a product such as V-Power represents. This means we need to offer not only the best choice of product, but the best service, too. Initially this will be through new initiatives such as pay-and-go via the customer's mobile phone, or attended service with assistants who can offer advice to our customers at the point at which they are making their decision. We have 4.5million customers who pass through our UK forecourts

every week, and what keeps us awake at night is the question of how we continue to offer our customers the greatest choice and the best price.

'Looking further ahead, there is still a lot of life left in the internal combustion engine, but we're an energy company, so we need to be evaluating the needs of our customers who may already have or are considering using alternative energy sources.

'Vehicles powered by compressed natural gas, hydrogen and electricity are all in the early stages of uptake and the demand is not there. Should this change, Shell needs to be ready to offer the fuels its customers want to buy, but for the foreseeable future we will continue to concentrate on becoming the leading premium fuels supplier.'

FUEL FOR THOUGHT

If you're reading evo, the chances are that you know the benefits of running your car on a premium fuel and wouldn't use anything other than a trusted brand. Only a small percentage of the fuel-buying public feel this way, however, and the majority of those eschewing premium fuels do so on the grounds of cost. This is something the oil companies have very little control over due to regional taxes.

From a marketing perspective there is a lot companies such as Shell can do to explain why we should buy their premium fuels, but from a practical point of view it will come down to fuel brands working more closely with car manufacturers to produce cleaner burning and more efficient fuels to work with more efficient and economical engines

The end result should be improved fuels offered across the board, which is good news for the driver - so long as we still have places to drive where we can enjoy the benefits, of course.

Stuart Gallagher

ASK GOODWIN

What's the best-sounding engine?

Mattheus Muller, Berlin



I'm spoilt for choice. My favourite car engines are V8s, but some of the greatest engines I've experienced don't have eight cylinders. One that did was in the Stealth B6, which is possibly one of the most inappropriately named cars of all time. In the back was a small-block Chevy V8 that sounded better than any other Chevy I've ever heard. Well, apart from the 8-litre monster that was in the McLaren M8D Can-Am car I drove at Donington Park many years ago. Going down the pitlane in second gear you could hear every firing stroke.

Even further back in time there were a couple of laps of Castle Combe in Nick Mason's Ferrari 250 GTO. These early Ferrari V12s don't just have an amazing exhaust note, they are so mechanical and at low revs there's a terrific thrash of valve gear and you think the whole thing is going to self-destruct

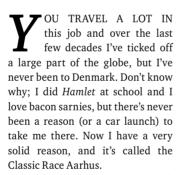
I can't think of many fourcylinder engines that have done it for me lust don't like the noise An exception is Ducati's V4 in its Desmodsedici road-going Moto GP rep. Rode one in the Brighton Speed Trials and around Brighton town and frightened the natives with it. I love the sound of twostroke bike engines, particularly Yamaha's racing TZ750. I raced against several and the noise used to make my spine tingle.

But if you want me to narrow it down to one engine. I can do that for you. It was the V12 fitted to the back of a Lamborghini Diablo SE30. At every opportunity I revved the guts out of that engine. It bellowed, vibrated, clattered and shoved the Diablo down the road at an impressive rate. I've never been in a Lamborghini-powered offshore powerboat, but I imagine it would sound pretty incredible.



Aarhus Classic

Denmark might seem an unlikely place to host a no-holds-barred racing festival, but the crosssection of machinery makes a trip well worth it



And because my Denmark geography is not too good, we'll make a quick visit to Google Maps. Aarhus is Denmark's second largest city and sits on the east coast of the Jutland peninsular. It's a substantial drive from the UK - more than 650 miles from Calais, in fact. Not a weekend road-trip there and back; more part of a holiday. Or you can fly there with Ryanair, from Stansted to Aarhus airport and then take a 40-minute bus ride to the city itself.

Once there you'll find a road circuit that's laid out in a very American fashion: think Long Beach. We're talking concrete barriers, high fencing and a long and narrow circuit that's extremely fast and pretty full-on. If you crash there is no run-off, so damage is virtually guaranteed. Grant Ford, who supplied the photographs for last month's piece on the Mdina



GP in Malta, and who is Britain's greatest evangelist for alternative motorsport events, says he's not been to an event like it.

'It's very different to most other classic events. Spectating is not so easy because of the fencing, but there are grandstands around the course. Unfortunately, if you really want to get close to the action, as you can at Angoulême (see evo 212) or Mdina, you need a press pass.'

It's a shame that it's tricky to get up close to the action, or rather you have to watch it through mesh. But this wouldn't put me off visiting on the weekend of May 27-29 next year because the line-up of machinery looks absolutely amazing. This year there were ten classes; seven racing classes and a further three for demonstration drives. Even the three demo classes looked promising as they were split between classic F1, Le Mans sportscars and midengined sportscars across all eras.





Above left: cars in the brilliantly named Danish Thundersport Championship. Top: the unforgiving walled circuit at Aarhus leaves its mark on a Lotus Cortina

For the racing classes there were historic pre-1965 and pre-1971, 'Youngtimers', and something called the Danish Thundersport Championship. Now, the last of these warrants some careful inspection because what I see justifies the cost of the Ryanair flight alone. DTC is a series for V8-powered silhouette race cars using 5.7-litre Chevy V8s that knock out 445bhp. Glassfibre bodies are used in either Camaro, Dodge Challenger or Mustang styles, topped with drivers of the calibre of Jan Magnussen and John Nielsen. Why hasn't the UK got a series like this?

If you're into more traditional stuff, the line-up of classics is vast, from E-types, Alfa Giulias and Abarths to Jägermeister-liveried 3-litre CSLs to race-prepped Mk1 Golf GTIs. Panel damage is not unusual due to the extremely tight and nadgery character of the circuit.

Michael O'Leary will get you

by COLIN GOODWIN photography by TORBEN HRAB & THOMAS JUEL

to Aarhus for a very reasonable price, but once you're there it goes a bit upwards with booze and much else rather dear. There's fantastic nightlife in Aarhus with a strong cafe culture. A canal runs through the town, although the 20-minute walk from its centre to the track is through a rather industrial area.

But back to the action. In the middle of the circuit is a park in which there's a huge display of vintage and classic machinery. It seems that the Danes are very fond or re-enactments and Grant Ford tells me that last year there was a rather eccentric set piece in which an Austin Seven with blokes dressed in British uniforms chased a Mercedes with opposite numbers aboard. Another display that you're unlikely to get at Goodwood is a royal behind the wheel of a race car. Prince Frederik of Denmark is

a bit of a sportsman and, since he lives near the circuit, last year used his royal blagging ability to slip behind the wheel of a Formula 5000 Chevron B24 for a few demo laps.

The driver line-up at Aarhus is predominantly Danish, but this year there was a pocket of Brits displaying F1 cars such as a Hesketh 308E and an ex-Schumacher Benetton. Drivers from the UK actually racing included a chap running under the name of Jim Clark in a Lotus Cortina, of course, and another in a '90s Mini Cooper.

Those thinking of taking part might want to do a recce next year to see just how mad the event is and what the odds of returning home in a car in one piece are. For me, the opportunity to see those silhouette V8 coupes racing, and historics too, is tempting me to break my Ryanair boycott.



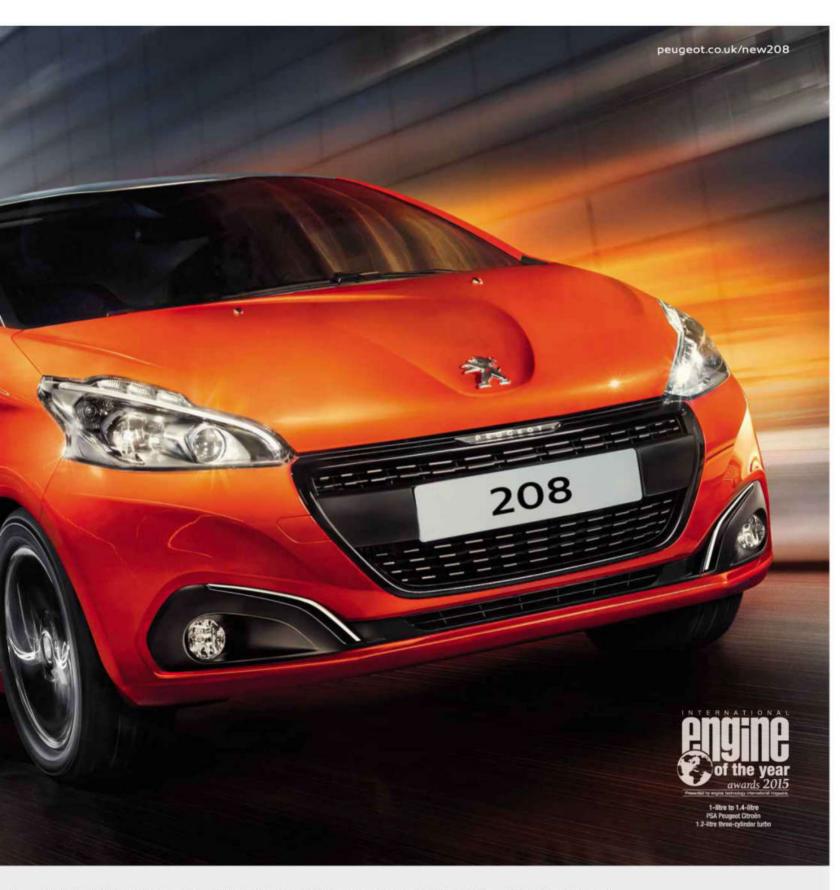




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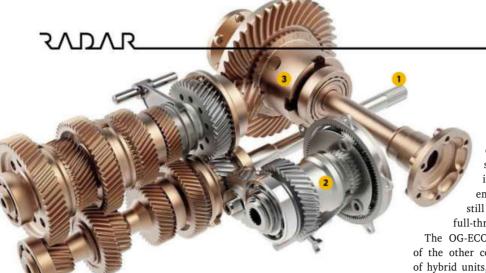
NEW PEUGEOT 208



 $Urban\ 40.4-78.5\ (7.0-3.6),\ Extra\ Urban\ 61.4-104.6\ (4.6-2.7),\ Combined\ 52.3-94.2\ (5.4-3.0)\ and\ CO2\ 125-79\ (g/km).$ $Hatchback\ 1.2\ Pure Tech\ 82\ 5\ door\ Allure\ with\ 16^c\ Titane\ Gloss\ Black\ Allays,\ with\ metallic\ paint,\ Cielo\ Panoramic\ Glass\ Roof\ and\ Menthol\ White\ exterior\ personalisation\ pack\ at\ $15,940$. This\ offer\ is\ applicable\ to\ retail\ sales\ only\ and\ not\ an\ fleet\ or\ local\ Peugeat\ Dealer\ to\ redeem\ this\ offer\ Prices\ and\ information\ correct\ at\ time\ of\ going\ to\ press\ Visit\ peugeat\ Could for\ full\ terms\ and\ canditions. Peugeat\ Mator\ Company\ PLC\ reserve\ the\ right\ to\ withdrow\ or\ amend\ this\ offer\ at\ an\ time\ tim$



by MICHAEL WHITELEY



FOCUS

HYBRID TRANSMISSIONS

If the name Oerlikon Graziano rings a bell, that's because it has supplied transmissions for many of our favourite performance cars, such as the Lamborghini Aventador, McLaren 650S and various Aston Martins, including the One-77. In recent years the firm has also taken an interest in the hybrid market, developing a hybrid transmission called the 'OG-ECO'. We spoke to Claudio Torrelli, head of R&D and vice president of OG, to find out why he thinks this gearbox is so special.

'The OG-ECO is essentially an adapted automated manual transmission [AMT] with a 120kW [161bhp] electric motor integrated within the case.' The result, claims OG, is a lighter and more efficient way to hybridise a powertrain when compared to hybrid transmissions based around a torque converter or dual-clutch transmission (DCT).

Being based on an AMT, the OG-ECO unit may be much lighter than a more complicated DCT hybrid, like the one used in the rear

of the Porsche 918 Spyder, say, but does it still have the big drawback associated with an AMT, namely slow and clunky gearchanges? Torrelli claims not, saying that the OG-ECO equals a DCT unit for comfort at lower speeds. Whereas in a normal AMT unit a gearchange would involve a (lengthy) break in torque while the gears are shifted, the OG-ECO uses torque from the electric motor to fill the gap between shifts. So in normal driving conditions there should be little discomfort when changing gear. However, when exploring

1. Drive from engine

2. Flectric gear set

3. Differential

66 OG claims
its transmission
is a lighter and
more efficient
way to hybridise a
powertrain 99

the upper end of the rev range, the electric motor can't quite provide the same torque as the internal combustion engine, and a jolt will still be experienced on full-throttle upshifts.

The OG-ECO is capable of all of the other common advantages of hybrid units, such as stop/start and electric boost. The electric motor is also used for reverse drive. 'The gearbox has no reverse gear set, reducing weight,' explained Torrelli. And due to an AMT having a smaller volumetric footprint than a DCT, Torrelli claims OG has 'placed a hybrid transmission in the same envelope as a standard DCT'.

The company has installed its gearbox in a Mercedes SLS AMG, which has has been touring Europe's top car manufacturers. Asked whether we will see the OG-ECO in production any time soon, Torrelli said: 'The technology has been well received by the industry [and we are] working towards a serial application using a unit the same size as in the demonstrator car.'

Torrelli also hinted towards the development of a two-speed electric drivetrain for front-axle fitment, with 'the possibility of another power unit on the rear axle'. The power figure for the front-axle system is around 50kW (67bhp). That's roughly half of the output of the equivalent motor in the £620,000 Porsche 918's nose.

So will OG's lighter, more compact technology mean we'll see hybrid tech making its way onto less-rarefied sports cars cars soon? The signs are certainly promising.



ASK MIKE Your tech questions answered

I've heard that blocking up the EGR valve on a diesel engine can improve performance. How does this work, and will it cause my car to fail its MOT on emissions?

- Ashley Fly

EGR, or exhaust gas recirculation, brings some of the exhaust gas back to the inlet manifold. These inert gases lower combustion-chamber temperatures, which in turn reduces NOx emissions.

However, the mixture of oil, carbon and diesel entering the inlet plumbing can block airways. I've seen an approximate 40 per cent reduction in inlet pipe aperture due to this (on a 50,000-mile BMW 120d).

To avoid this, you can remove the EGR valve and have the resulting ECU error coded out. But be warned: an MOT fail is a possibility and the modification could affect your insurance.

Send your question to experts@evo.co.uk



TECH GAME-CHANGERS

ANTI-LAG

First application: F1/World Rally Championship When: 1980s



Anti-lag systems are designed to reduce the delay in the arrival of boost pressure normally experienced with turbochargers at low reys

Without antilag, lifting off the throttle while on boost would mean the throttle plate would close and the boost pressure from the compressor would be forced out through a blow-off valve or recirculation valve. Then, when reapplying the throttle, the driver would have to wait for the turbo to respool before full

boost occured.

With anti-lag, however, when the throttle plate is closed the pressure from the turbo is diverted through a pressure relief valve, which feeds the pressurised air back into the exhaust manifold, bypassing

the engine. A modification of the ignition timing and fuel mix means that the boost air can be combusted near the turbine of the turbo, keeping the turbo spooling, ready to force charged air into the engine when the throttle plate reopens.

Anti-lag is not an engine-friendly system, as it puts increased stress on the exhaust manifold and turbo components. But in competition scenarios this is a small price to pay for the absence of time-sapping turbo-lag.



edited by SAM SHEEHAN

FOCUS

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GOODYEAR TYRE TESTER

NDLESS FUEL, UNLIMITED sets of tyres and an empty test track – that's the stuff of dreams, right? For Guillaume Lafitte, a Goodyear tyre tester, it's just another day in the office.

'I'd say I love 89 per cent of my job,' laughs the Frenchman. 'The meetings are boring, but the driving? It's all fun.'

Lafitte started as an engineer but now spends most of his time behind the wheel. He says being a tyre tester is a high-pressure job, but on arrival at Goodyear's picturesque Mireval proving ground (which stretches across 444 acres of oceanfacing hillside in the Hérault region of southern France), I'm not feeling particularly sympathetic.

The facility has ten varieties of asphalt spread over six test surfaces – two of which are proper circuits – so that tyres can be tested in almost every condition. A 5.3-mile circuit that circles the ground mixes high-speed turns with a couple of heavy braking zones – enough to push tyres to their limits in ambient temperatures that regularly exceed 30 degrees.

Then there's a smaller, wet circuit, which despite curving and winding its way up and down the hill

manages to maintain a consistent 1mm-deep covering of water.

There's also a circular test track used for curved aquaplaning tests, which in turn is surrounded by support roads and strips used for dry and wet braking tests.

'We test 50 parameters for each tyre – things like noise, rolling resistance, dry and wet grip – and we do multiple tests over and over,' Lafitte says. 'And throughout this we have to make sure we're consistent with the testing, otherwise the data is wrong.'

Compare this to **evo**'s annual tyre test, which analyses 11 parameters, and it suddenly becomes apparent that tyre testing can be quite repetitive.

With just four tests on the agenda (an eighth of what Goodyear's engineers do) I'm only sampling the job today, but it soon becomes clear how taxing the work is. Especially after the third consecutive emergency stop. The (more hardened) testers normally do ten in a row...

It turns out that curved aquaplaning tests are also rather strenuous and require commitment lap after lap. A section of the circular test track is submerged under 7mm of water and the test driver will arrive

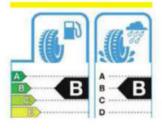
at this section at 50mph and with about 90 degrees of lock on. Instinct would tell typical drivers to ease off the throttle and tighten the steering angle, but the tester must keep throttle and steering inputs constant despite the fact that the car suddenly and violently understeers over the water. 'Changing anything would upset the data,' Lafitte explains.

Up to 20 dizzying laps can be attempted in one session, with the driver having to apply identical inputs every time – something that's remarkably hard to do – in order to accurately measure how far the car travels off its normal trajectory.

The most fun part of the job comes on the wet circuit, where I'm allowed to clip kerbs and get our Golf's rear axle moving. The dry circuit, with its fast bends, doesn't disappoint either, but where I spend much of the time giggling, Lafitte's role means he has too much work to do to relax.

'A tyre tester's job is critical,' explains Sébastien Morin, Goodyear's product evaluation manager. 'The driver is key to a tyre's development. If he or she provides us with incorrect data, the whole tyre development can be ruined. It could even lose us an OEM contract.'

With such intense competition between the world's biggest tyre makers, testing engineers such as Lafitte play a pivotal role in ensuring the next-generation of rubber is better than before. It's a neverending task and the pressure is high, but there's no denying it's a job that beats driving a desk.



THE TRUTH ABOUT TYRE LABELS

You might be surprised to learn that while tyre grading labels are now mandatory in the EU, there's no independent body to verify them. Instead, it's down to the tyre manufacturers themselves to grade their own products, so does this leave the door open for made-up ratings?

'It wouldn't be possible for premium brands to just make ratings up – they all test each other's tyres so someone would notice,' says Jonathan Benson, a tyre expert who runs tyrereviews.co.uk.

'But that's not to say they don't know how to get the best out of the label criteria. Water depth, surface temperature and co-efficient of grip can all be modified within allowed parameters, which the companies with the biggest budgets will be taking advantage of.'

The real issue with tyre labels is that they only reveal a small part of a tyre's performance. 'Someone might look at a budget tyre and see that it's only one grade away from a premium in wet performance.' says Benson, 'They might then think it's a bargain. But that tyre will likely be worse in several other areas. The next generation of the label needs to at least include wear. Wet grip and wear are contrasting qualities: it's difficult to score well in both criteria

'Keep looking at magazine tests and independent tyre reviews. Unlike the labels, they're testing all round performance and not just a very narrow window of it'

For more info, visit evo.co.uk/tyres







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edited by ANTONY INGRAM photography by ASTON PARROTT

BRAKE COMPONENTS

Better brakes? It's money well spent. Here's a cross-section of what's on offer











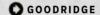




These serious-looking discs were inspired by a similar style found on mountain bikes (created in response to a customer complaining about mud and dirt sticking to his brake discs). The other benefits are better cooling and less weight, while WP Pro's compact calipers are also lighter than most.

Pictured:

Brake kit for BMW E46 M3. Comprises ultra-light discs with forged alloy bell, EX6R calipers with vented titanium alloy pistons, and hand-laid carbonfibre cooling ducts c£2500 (front)



Goodridge sells 'fluid transfer systems', including brake lines for cars and other motorised vehicles. Its stainless steel braided lines don't expand under hydraulic pressure, which improves pedal feel and increases the effectiveness of braking inputs.

Pictured:

Braided brake lines for BMW E36 M3 £119.80 (full set)

O TAROX

A Formula 1 world title with Keke Rosberg and Williams in 1982 is among Tarox's greatest achievements, but there's plenty to recommend them for on the road, too. These discs are designed for both road and track use, with grooves to deglaze the pads without sacrificing strength.

Pictured:

Brake kit for Nissan 350Z. Comprises braided flexi lines, B360 ten-piston calipers (eight-piston shown) finished in satin, two-piece 360mm steel billet discs with alloy bells, Corsa track pads (not shown) and fitting equipment £3000

O AP RACING

AP Racing is another company with significant F1 experience. Its brakes and/or clutches have been on every title-winning F1 car since 1967. The unique 'J hook' grooves seen here improve bite and clear debris from the discs; the Radi-CAL calipers are made from aluminium and reduce unsprung weight.

Pictured:

Radi-CAL six-pot brake caliper for R35 Nissan GT-R £336

Front J hook brake disc for R35 Nissan GT-R £647.07







O BREMBO

Italian firm Brembo doesn't just build effective braking components, it's also cultivated an air of desirability to anyone serious about performance cars. With clients including the Ferrari, Red Bull and Mercedes F1 teams, that's not surprising. From floating discs to fluid, the company offers a range of products suitable for virtually any car.

Pictured, from top:

GT kit (calipers, discs and pads) for Porsche 997 Carrera S £3901.20 (front)

Trackday brake fluid (500ml) **£25.87-32.10**

Type III rotors for Porsche 997 Carrera S £1116 (front)













C EBC

Helpfully identified by colour, EBC's brake pads are available for a huge range of vehicles. Its black pads are OEM replacements, while greens are a suitable road-going upgrade for performance vehicles. The yellow pads are designed for fast road and trackday use, blues are track-use only, while orange are full race pads requiring a proper bedding-in procedure.

Pictured:

Greenstuff pads for Mazda MX-5 Mk1 **£53.17 (front)**

Yellowstuff pads for Mazda MX-5 Mk1 £66.91 (front)

Orangestuff pads for Citroën DS3 1.6 £159.99 (front) Bluestuff pads for Mazda MX-5 Mk3 £102.36 (front)

Mk3 £102.36 (front)
Ultimax2 OEM replacement pads for Mazda MX-5 Mk1 £23.99 (front)

Turbo Groove vented front discs for Mazda MX-5 Mk1 £107.39 (front)



www.evo.co.uk 031

Closing the gap

The black art of vehicle setup is going digital, but are the simulators employed for such a task accurate enough? Ansible Motion believes its is



by ANTONY INGRAM

OW DO WE MAKE BETTER cars? In the future, the answer could be to make better simulators. For Ansible Motion, based at the Hethel Engineering Centre, a stone's throw from Lotus in Norfolk, that simulator already exists.

The company claims its simulator is not just more advanced than existing alternatives, but more compact, more dynamic and more adaptable, too. The result is the degree to which Ansible says its 'engineering class' simulator matches the motion of actual cars. It offers simulation in the truest sense of the word, replicating the real world as accurately as possible yet ensuring controlled conditions for repeatable, scientific testing.

In theory, the new hardware also solves a fundamental problem of existing simulators. Most systems currently on the market use a 'hexapod' setup. This positions the driver's pod high in the air on six sturdy hydraulic or electric rams.

While relatively good at replicating G-forces, these simulators can only do so very briefly – until one of the rams reaches the end of its travel. This limits the range of movement, too: some actions require travel in more than one direction, but if one of the supports is already at maximum or minimum extension, travel in other planes can be restricted.

Current simulators also struggle with latency - the delay between a driver inputting a command and the machine reacting. It's a result of the large, cumbersome rams and the momentum of the pod atop them. And a side effect of all this weight is that companies installing simulators need dedicated foundations to handle the mass to prevent the whole machine dragging itself out of the floor.

Ansible's 'Delta' setup started as a clean-sheet design to tackle some of these issues. Rather than a hexapod, it sits upon three stacked, sliding platforms. Visually, it's much more compact, being lower and requiring less real estate. Practically, it's also a lot lighter – Ansible says it can be used in any standard commercial space without modifying the foundations.

The benefit of the sliding platforms is that even at the extent of one movement - say, lateral cornering forces - the sim still has a full range





of movement on its other axes for acceleration or braking, or rolling and yawing motions.

Ensconced in the car-like pod and surrounded by eight metres of wraparound screen, the movements are initially quite convincing. For a start, the screen is large enough that you can look out of the side window and still see passing scenery - a useful touch that helps to immerse you in the experience.

In a virtual cone slalom, the way the 'car' reacts to direction changes, dips, dives and turns relates almost directly to your inputs, and the same applies when negotiating concentric circles, where it's easy to induce convincing understeer and oversteer.

This benefits professional drivers, as the latency of traditional setups limits their effectiveness at testing small dynamic changes in a virtual environment. The more accurately a car's behaviour can be felt in a simulator, the more finely it can be adjusted with software - and by extension, the more relevant the simulation will be to developing a real car, whether for road or track.

66 The more accurately behaviour can be felt in a simulator, the more finely it can be adjusted 🥍

Kia Cammaerts, Ansible's technical director, claims the increased realism helps reduce motion sickness, which is often caused by a mismatch between visual cues and the driver's sense of balance. Unfortunately, my own tolerance for undulating motions is relatively low, and while I avoided redecorating the interior of Ansible's pristine demonstrator unit, one particular set of twists, rises and falls did befuddle my own vestibular system enough to cause discomfort.

Ultimately, a simulator is only so accurate in its movements, and in this early stage there's still some work to be done to truly replicate the sensations of driving. It's getting close, though, and that can only be a good thing for streamlining the development of future vehicles.

NOW & THEN

Multifunction steering wheels



You'll find seven controls on the steering wheel of the Ferrari 488 GTB. From starting the engine to adjusting the car's Side Slip Angle Control system, sitting behind the wheel is akin to taking Sebastian Vettel's place in his latest F1 car. Well, at least it can feel that way.

Until the 1970s, the only button you'd find on most steering wheels was the horn, although even this could be relegated to the end of a stalk behind the wheel. In 1974 Lincoln added cruise control functions to the wheel of its Continental, and the 1988 Pontiac Trans-Am's wheel (above) had a full 12 buttons that operated the audio system.

The rise of controls on F1 steering wheels took hold in the 1990s. Initially their application was crude - they usually sprouted between spokes - but they later became better integrated.

Buttons now feature on most road-car steering wheels, but none are more prominent than Ferrari's manettino dial, first seen on the F430 in 2004 (below).





Eco gearshift tips

Unfortunately you can't turn this off on many cars, but evo staff writer Sam Sheehan wishes you could: 'Do people really need this? In most cars you can barely see the little indicator anyway, so how effective can it be?

by SIMON DE BURTON

WATCH TECH

A Lange & Söhne Zeitwerk Minute Repeater



Prestigious Saxon watch house A Lange & Söhne celebrates two milestones this year: 200 years since the birth of its founder, FA Lange, and 170 years since he established his original watch factory. To mark the occasions, the firm has opened a new manufacturing facility - and made an extraspecial watch in the form of the Zeitwerk Minute Repeater.

Its 771-part
movement features
a decimal 'minute
repeater' mechanism:
at the push of a
button, tiny gongs
strike the current
hour, the number of
ten-minute intervals
past the hour (that's
the 'decimal' part),
and finally any
additional minutes.

For slightly more conventional time-telling, the watch displays the hours and minutes digitally – the numbers printed on discs behind the dial.

Those gongs are individually hand-tuned for optimum sound quality, a process that is said to account for a large portion of the build time of the watch, which comes only in platinum – and costs more than £300,000...



THIS MONTH

Richard Mille RM-011 Felipe Massa 10th Anniversary Edition

From: richardmille.com
Price: £111,500

Ultra high-end watch brand Richard Mille is marking its decade-long partnership with F1 star Felipe Massa through a pair of limited-edition watches, the most 'affordable' of which is this version of the RM-011, 100 of which will be made. A flyback chronograph, it has a movement made entirely from grade 5 titanium and a case made from NTPT (that's 'North Thin Ply Technology') carbon – meaning the watch is almost unfeasibly light yet exceptionally strong. Details are picked-out in Massa's racing colours of blue and yellow.

Chopard Superfast Chrono Porsche 919 Jacky Ickx Edition

From: chopard.com
Price: £8460

A year on from becoming the official timing partner of Porsche Motorsport, Chopard celebrated the impressive one-two finish of the 919s at Le Mans 2015 – and promptly produced this chronograph dedicated to Belgian legend Jacky Ickx, who had no fewer than six wins at the event, four of which were in Porsches. In tribute to the man they called 'Monsieur Le Mans', the watch features an inner bezel and counters in dark blue dotted with white (like his race helmet), while the dial stripes are inspired by the 919's rear diffuser. Just 100 will be made.

Porsche Design Chronotimer Series 1

From: porsche-design.com
Price: £3550-5450

Porsche Design watches were produced by the Swiss brand Eterna – until three years ago when the latter was sold to China Haidian holdings. Porsche Design has since used its inhouse team to develop a new range of own-label watches, the first of which is the Chronotimer Series 1. Based on the original Porsche Design Chronograph 1 of 1972, it features a 42mm blackened titanium case and is powered by a trusty Valjoux 7750 self-winding movement. Bezels can be had in black, titanium or rose gold, and dials in black, carbon or deep blue.

PANERAI LUMINOR PAM 422

As worn by Les Goble, performance driving executive, Aston Martin

'I began to appreciate the value of good watches when I joined Aston Martin 14 years ago. Just as a great car is about more than just getting from A to B, so a great watch is about more than just telling the time.

'My first decent watch was an IWC Doppelchronograph, which I still have and wear every day. But about 12 years ago I discovered Panerai and was really taken by the Luminor and its unusual crown protection device. The first Panerai I bought was a PAM 23B, but a couple of years ago I visited a

wonderful watch shop in Lech, Austria, and saw a limited-edition PAM 422 in a standalone display case. It was love at first sight – and last year I managed to buy one.

'It's directly based on a 1940s model, right down to the handwound movement and Plexiglas crystal.'

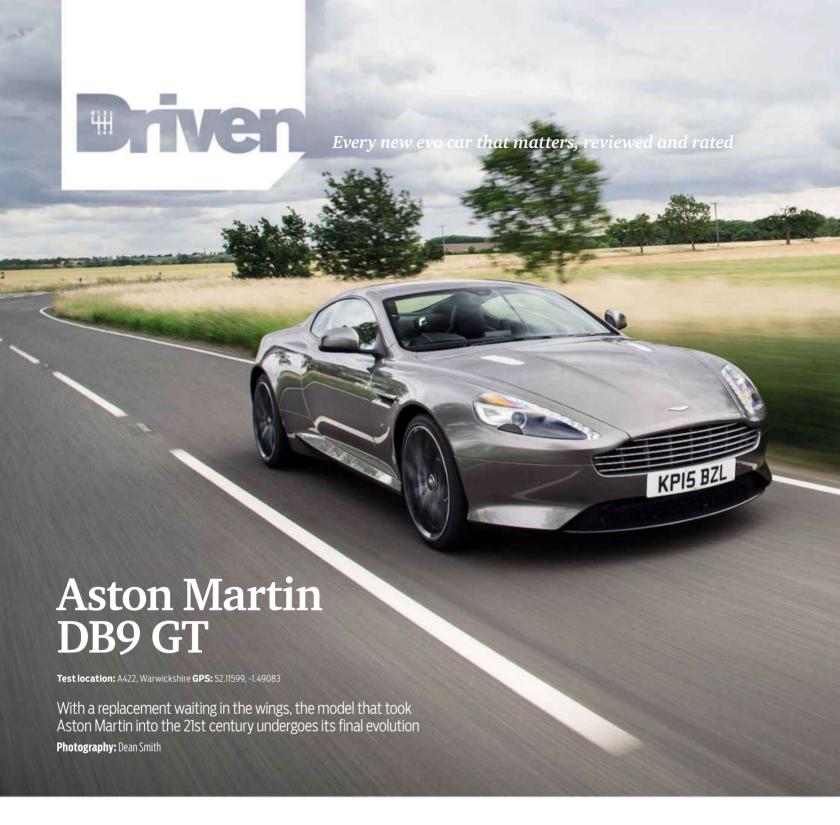




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UPON ITS LAUNCH in 2004 the DB9 established itself as the definitive modern

Aston. Lithe looks and a supremely stylish interior set the perfect tone, while the kudos of silken V12 power gave this contemporary grand tourer the gravitas it needed to get the revitalised British brand back in the premium luxury game.

Fast-forward to 2015 and the DB9

remains a stalwart of Aston's range. A major redesign in 2011, where the original car was effectively replaced by the short-lived Virage, gave the model a new lease of life and a more muscular appearance, but there's no denying the car has found it increasingly tough to fight younger, faster, fresher rivals on equal terms. Now, as it enters its twilight years, the DB9 has received another significant makeover; its last before

an all-new replacement makes its expected debut next year. Indeed, the 'GT' is the last of the DB9s.

The nuts-and-bolts differences between the new GT and outgoing DB9 begin and end with the engine. Torque output remains the same, at 457lb ft, but the trusty quadcam V12 now develops 540bhp, an increase of 30bhp over the previous model, which makes this the most powerful DB9 ever. Those hoping

the new DB9 GT would follow the Vanquish and Rapide models in recently benefiting from the fitment of a new eight-speed Touchtronic automatic transmission will be disappointed, for the DB9 soldiers on with the old six-speed automatic gearbox. That's clearly a pragmatic decision based on the model's short lifespan, but it's still a shame, because the six-speed transmission is showing its age, while the eight-



Above: GT can be identified by its black painted splitter and diffuser (both are available in carbonfibre as an option), new 20inch ten-spoke alloys, subtly revised headlights, black anodised brake calipers and an engraving on the fuel filler cap

speeder offers the sharper and keener driving experience.

With a 0-62mph time of 4.5sec and a top speed of 183mph, the GT is hardly sluggish, but such is the heat of competition at this level that it won't be winning many Top Trumps battles. Then again, like all Astons its appeal lies as much in the manner in which it delivers its performance as the raw figures themselves. That pepped-up 5.9-litre V12 ensures

it has ample performance and makes all the right noises, while the timeless styling means this is a car with presence and charisma to spare. In short, you'd have to have a heart of stone not to find the DB9 GT hugely desirable.

Looks and luxury play their part in this process of seduction, but so too does the DB9's dynamism. At heart it remains much more of a sports car than the equivalent Bentley or Benz.

This month

ASTON MARTIN DB9 GT DB9 bows out with its most





BIRDS B4-3.5 Upgrades turn BMW's 435i into a faster, more focused machine





NISSAN JUKE-R 2.0





JAGUAR XFS New XF arrives with 375bhp and a chassis to die for



DMS McLAREN 650S

641bhp not enough? Tuner remap takes Brit supercar up to 720bhp



The team

With the DB9 GT our lead Driven this month, we asked the **evo** road test team to name their favourite GT car.



NICK TROTT

'Aston Martin Rapide S. Big distances skim underneath like you're on some kind of levitation device



STUART GALLAGHER

Managing editor

'612 Scaglietti, because it doesn't go around shouting like today's Ferraris do'



HENRY CATCHPOLE

Features editor

 ${\it `Maserati\,Gran Turismo\,Sport}.$ Relaxed, elegant, fast enough, Just a lovely thing to spend time in'



DAN PROSSER Road test editor

'Travelling by Mercedes S63 AMG Coupe is probably as close as we'll get to teleportation



JETHRO BOVINGDON

Contributing editor

'Carrera GT, Ford GT... Oh, not that sort of GT. OK, then: Ferrari 575, Fiorano pack and manual 'box, Stunning'



RICHARD MEADEN

Contributing editor

'A manual Ferrari 612 Scaglietti. Mad styling, mighty performance and four proper seats, Magic'



DAVID VIVIAN

Contributing editor 'Bentley Continental GT Speed. Does what it says on the tin'



ADAM TOWLER Contributing road tester

'2007 Aston Martin Vanquish S Works Service Manual. Feisty, suave; oozes gravitas. A grand touring natural'





Below: gentleman's express vibe is given a sporting bent by plenty of carbonfibre and an Alcantara-wrapped steering wheel; a One-77-inspired 'square' wheel is available as an option



'Rivals lack the elegance and warmth of character that's so apparent in the Aston'

amongst the carbon weave, plus touch-sensitive switches from the Vanquish. Options include a generous choice of special-finish leathers, intricate contrast stitching and a fabulous Bang & Olufsen stereo. Outside, there's discreet 'GT' badging, while tempting cost options include a carbon front splitter and rear diffuser, and bold, diamond-turned alloy wheels.

Aston Martin has long been a brand for aspirational drivers. It creates the kind of cars people make promises to buy themselves when good fortune permits. Do

those same people approach their purchasing decisions in the same way that a car magazine arrives at a group test verdict? Possibly not, but you can't ignore - and nor should Aston - the fact that there are some rather fine alternatives at the DB9 GT's £140,000 asking price (or £161,000 as-tested). The most obvious and closely aligned rival is Bentley's W12 Continental GT Speed. It doesn't possess the Aston's beauty or lightness of touch, but counters with sledgehammer performance and supreme quality. You might also consider the Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe.

Each offers a stellar powertrain and epic performance, more interior space and a far higher level of technology, but they lack the elegance and warmth of character that's so apparent in the Aston. It shouldn't be a contender in 2015, and its replacement needs to move the game on considerably, but somehow the DB9 remains a delectable device.

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)

The steering has plenty of weight and feel, while the suspension is taut and controlled. Actually it's a bit *too* firm at low speeds, even in the softest of the adaptive damping system's three settings.

Fortunately, above 30mph it settles nicely, at which point you'll revel in the GT's grip and agility. In Normal mode the emphasis is on smoothness rather than outright responsiveness, so if wafting isn't your thing you'll want to select Sport mode, which wakes up the engine and transmission and relaxes the exhaust silencing to dramatic effect.

From here you'll be more inclined to explore the multi-stage settings for the suspension and stability control systems to find the sweetest compromise between grip and slip.

The DB9 might be billed as a 2+2, but anyone older than a toddler won't enjoy riding in the back. However, those in the front will fall for the look, feel and comfort offered by what is still a special interior. The materials and craftsmanship are exceptional, and the GT features some lovely details, such as a new carbonfibre centre console with fine copper filaments that shimmer

**** **Specification** evo rating 🛂 Strong performance, sharp handling, character, interior 📮 Needs eight-speed auto 'box, low-speed ride too firm Engine CO2 **Basic price** Power Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight V12, 5935cc 333g/km 540bhp @ 6750rpm 457lb ft @ 5500rpm 4.5sec (claimed) 183mph (claimed) 1785kg (307bhp/ton) £140,000

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Advertising feature



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The thing is, though, that while for an **evo** group test it's mandatory to pick a victor, for many of us any car in the test would do just fine. Although one car most likely wouldn't be enough; most of us would love to own two or three. Maybe all of them...

Sadly, few of us have limitless funds. Yet there is a cost-effective way to enjoy the varied delights of a fantasy garage without the expense and logistical turmoil that can accompany multi-car ownership. Performance Portfolio is an exclusive private members club that puts you behind the wheel of a selection of the world's most exhilarating supercars, while relieving you of the hassle of buying them, servicing them, insuring them and storing them, not to mention suffering the sting of depreciation.

According to Performance Portfolio's boss, Alan Gorrie, the idea is that the fleet should be fluid, with additions being made as another key supercar becomes available. Although Performance Portfolio is Scotland-based, its expansion plans include a London office in the very near future, and its cars can already be delivered anywhere within the UK.

Supercar clubs are nothing new, of course,



THE FLEET

The supercars in Performance Portfolio's £2million collection have been specially chosen for being rewarding drivers' cars. The current line-up includes:

Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4 Lamborghini Superleggera LP570-4 Ferrari 458 Italia Ferrari F430 Spider McLaren 650S Porsche 911 GTS Audi R8 V10 Spyder S-tronic Aston Martin V8 Vantage Nissan GT-R R35 Radical RXC Turbo

And on the cards for 2016 are:

McLaren 570S Ferrari 488 GTB Porsche Cayman GT4

yet the fiscal benefits remain compelling. What makes Performance Portfolio all the more special and in tune with the **evo** ethos is that it also offers the chance to experience the supercar lifestyle. There's an enticing selection of European driving tours in the Performance Portfolio fleet; trips to international motor shows by private jet; wine and champagne tastings; and glamorous outings to F1 events, to name but a few membership attractions.

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tolls) European Supercar Tours are already hugely popular, often selling out within days of invitations to join being distributed. And no wonder. The 2016 brochure includes adventures from Edinburgh to Monaco; London to the Italian supercar cities; a nineday extravaganza encompassing Europe's most enthralling drivers' roads; a visit to the legendary Nürburgring as part of an Austrian tour; and a six-day exploration of Scotland's stunning Highlands roads.

To make membership as inclusive as possible for supercar devotees, Performance Portfolio offers a range of different membership levels; all aim to maximise choice and opportunities for members. There's also a range of costeffective corporate incentive schemes – 'hit targets, drive supercars' is a business language we all understand!

The logic of the Performance Portfolio proposition makes overwhelming sense, and offers great value, huge convenience and alluring variety.

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Birds B4-3.5

Test location: B660. Cambridgeshire **GPS:** 52.449732, -0.335888

BMW's lacklustre 435i Coupe gets transformed by tuner's power, diff and suspension upgrades

drivers an LSD – regardless of the supplier – is a real no-brainer.

Similarly, Birds' suspension tweaks help to turn a slightly woolly chassis into a sharper, more agile one. The springs and dampers (£1683.60) and anti-roll bars (£1052.40) aren't just off-the-shelf parts, either; Birds has invested a great deal of time and effort into getting the settings just so for the 435i. The low-speed ride of this particular car is very uncompromising - although it settles markedly at medium and high speeds - but much of that is down to the 20-inch wheels and the very low-profile tyre sidewalls. In dynamic terms the car now feels like a fast BMW coupe should. Rather than wallowing in corners and running out of body control over crests and undulations, it feels better supported and more keyed into the road surface.

Shackled by BMW's carefully orchestrated model hierarchy, the 435i values style over substance in its standard form, but Birds' upgrade kit turns a rather underwhelming car into a compelling one.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

FOR A CAR THAT HAS more than 300bhp and a rear-wheeldrive chassis, the standard BMW 435i is a curiously underwhelming thing to drive. Even in M Sport specification it feels remote and aloof, as though it's

unimpressed by an enthusiastic driver's efforts to hurry it along. As a result, the 435i has enormous

untapped potential.

Buckinghamshire-based tuner Birds is well placed to realise it. Birds has been fettling BMWs for some 35 years, which bodes well for its 435i upgrade. Costing £7248 (including installation) the package consists of a power increase from 302 to 375bhp, a Quaife limited-slip differential in place of the factory open diff, and revised springs, dampers and anti-roll bars.

This particular demo car is also fitted with 20-inch Hartge wheels (£4752), a twin-exit rear exhaust silencer (£1924) and Alcon brakes (£3380 front, £2810 rear), bringing its total conversion cost to a not insignificant £20.114.

The engine upgrade, which costs

£2496 on its own, is a relatively simple ECU software update, but it also comes with a two-year engine and driveline warranty. The 3-litre, six-cylinder twin-turbo unit is pretty unstressed in standard guise and even in this higher state of tune it feels refined and linear, but it now has a broader mid-range and a much more energetic top end. Straight-line performance hasn't suddenly leapt to M4 levels, but the revised software has certainly resulted in a more characterful and urgent powertrain.

One of the big frustrations of the standard 435i is its open diff, which relies too heavily on the traction and stability control systems or otherwise wastefully spins up the unloaded inside wheel. BMW does offer a dealer-fitted LSD through its M Performance accessories range, but at £2940 (before fitting) it doesn't come cheap, and as it's a clutch type unit it'll need maintenance somewhere down the line. The Quaife diff, which costs £2016 when bought separately through Birds, is a geared type and should be more durable.



The uprated differential is best appreciated in Sport+ mode, which slackens the stability control system and allows some slip at the rear axle. The car now finds better drive away from corners, particularly on greasy surfaces, and when you deliberately feed in too much throttle the breakaway is progressive and predictable. Clumsy and heavyfooted as the 435i is in standard form, this uprated version performs with much more of the athleticism and sense of fun found in a proper performance coupe. For the keenest

Specification

Engine CO2 Power In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo n/a 375bhp @ 5700rpm

Torque 383lb ft @ 3200rpm

Upgrade releases the 435i's potential 📮 Harsh low-speed ride on 20-inch wheels 0-62mph Top speed 4.8sec (est) 170mph (est)

evo rating Weight 1602kg (238bhp/ton)





Nissan Juke-R 2.0

Test location: Stowe Circuit, Silverstone GPS: 52.06898, -1.01579

ATTENDING THE launch of the 'new'
Nissan Juke-R is
one of the weirdest

things I've done in this job. You may recall that the Juke-R of 2012 was essentially a GT-R drivetrain and floorpan cut and shut to fit under the short, bulbous body of Nissan's incredibly successful crossover. In fact it was a lot more complicated than that, and the execution by race team and engineering outfit RML was beautifully resolved, but you get the idea. Two examples were sold.

So, this is a facelifted version of a car that hardly existed. Even stranger is that it's actually one of the two original prototypes, only rehashed with new styling and a bit more power. This time it's different, though. This time Nissan (RML, really) might build more, depending on how many people want to part with £400,000 plus taxes. The chap from the UAE who bought the two original examples might grab another couple, but rumours of a 'production run' are probably a little disingenuous. The 2.0 remains first

and foremost a marketing exercise.

But, as marketing exercises go, it's pretty damn hard not to like. It has the same matt black brutalism theme as before but overall the look is more polished. The carbon bumper is all-new with much greater cooling capacity and there are new GT-R wheels, new front and rear wings taken from the 2015MY Juke but with additional carbonfibre extensions, new sills, and a new rear bumper and bare carbon diffuser. The LED front and rear lights are also from the latest Juke. With 285-section rear Bridgestones barely covered by those deliciously absurd 'arch flares and almost cubic dimensions, it has undeniable presence. If Christian Bale's Batmobile mounted a GT-R Nismo, the offspring could very well look like the Juke-R 2.0.

Beneath the wild shape is a GT-R's 3.8-litre V6, six-speed twin-clutch gearbox and four-wheel drive. The wheelbase is 250mm shorter than a GT-R's, the centre of gravity is higher, and power has been massaged to 592bhp and 481lb ft – the same as the GT-R Nismo. Despite all the

Got half a million pounds burning a hole in your Swiss bank account? Nissan might have a remedy for that



carbonfibre, it's no lightweight, at around 1800kg, but Nissan still claims 0-60mph in 3.3sec. The top speed remains untested.

Inside, the dash is familiar GT-R but the driving position feels very odd indeed. You sit much higher, of course, but the pedals are offset, and because the seat is mounted lower than in your average Juke, your legs are bent unnaturally and feel cramped. Visibility past the A-pillar is atrocious and you have a rear-view mirror full of roll-cage. It really is an odd mash-up but it's also oddly compelling, like the ultimate project car executed with OEM resources and the skills of a top race team.

To drive, the 2.0 is mostly hilarious. There's the familiar gritty sound and thudding power delivery of a GT-R, the same fast but mechanical-

feeling gearshifts and the balance feels similar, too. Yet everything is exaggerated because you're sitting higher: there's more body roll and that short wheelbase can't smooth the weight transfer sufficiently to stop the car swinging around. On the brakes it squirms and slips. As you turn, the front can wash wide before the four-wheel-drive system tries to restore equilibrium, but soon you learn to use the body roll and flick the car into turns, hit the apex just as the car tips into oversteer and then ride out the slide for as long as you can. It's not languid or graceful, and you're busy working the wheel, but it's huge fun and really satisfying once you've got it. In short, it's suitably bonkers, although the fourwheel drive tends to overheat if you spend too much time sideways.

Should you buy one at nearly half a million sterling? Nope, unless you have so many billions that the asking price is a complete irrelevance. But I can say unequivocally that it's the best Nissan Juke available today.

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)

Specification

Engine V6, 3799cc, twin-turbo CO2

Power 592bhp @ 6800rpm ■ The pick of the Juke range
■ Quite expensive, poor visibility, boot space

481lb ft @ 3200rpm

Torque

he Juke range 📮 (

0-60mph 3.3sec (claimed) **Top speed** 185mph (est) **evo rating**Weight
1800kg (334bhp/ton)

Basic price





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Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown is a Leon ST CUPRA 280 with optional Sub8 Performance Pack, CUPRA Black-Line and Nevada white metallic paint.

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon ST CUPRA in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 32.1 (8.8) - 33.6 (8.4); extra-urban 50.4 (5.6) - 49.6 (6.6); combined 42.2 (6.7) - 42.8 (6.6). CO₂ emissions 157 - 154 g/km.



Jaguar XF S

Test location: Lizarraga, Navarra, Spain **GPS:** 42.87438, -2.03527

We'll have to wait for the XFR, but in the meantime there's this 375bhp 'S' version of the new XF



HERE'S THE LATEST creation from JLR's relentless product offensive: the new

XF saloon. It's an **evo** sort of car, although not in a way that's immediately apparent.

Firstly, it looks much like its younger brother, the XE; perhaps surprisingly so. It uses the same 'aluminium-intensive' platform too, which contributes to weight savings of as much as a 190kg over the outgoing XF when comparing models like-for-like. The XF is also a slightly shorter, lower car now, but thanks to a longer wheelbase and clever packaging there's more room inside, especially on the rear pew.

It has a cosy-feeling, clubby cabin that wraps around its occupants in a way completely opposed to the broad, clinical environment in, say, a BMW 5-series. The design is arguably more cohesive, with a sumptuous leather dash top and pleasant wood finishes on higher spec variants. Conversely, there are some areas that betray penny pinching: the driver's seat should drop lower and Jaguar's infotainment system still lags behind those of its rivals.





There are three engines for the UK at launch, the most important of which is the new Ingenium 2-litre diesel in either 161bhp or 178bhp form, largely due to the former's 70.6mpg and 104g/km ratings. Nevertheless, along with the 3-litre TDV6, it's the 3-litre XF S, which features a 375bhp supercharged V6, that should get your radar bleeping.

Expectations are high given that the XF S has a better power-to-weight ratio as an E39 M5. And yet somehow, despite the promise of 0-60mph in 5.0sec, the supercharged petrol six manages to underwhelm. It picks up promptly from low revs and pulls keenly through the mid-range but lacks top-end vigour and has had a charisma bypass, emitting mainly a harsh, anodyne note.

The eight-speed auto 'box from ZF is the only transmission offered on the S, but in the XF it lacks that final veneer of calibration polish that makes it such a standout success in the 5-series. The feel of the paddles is well judged, but the thump as the next gear slots home is contrived and there is occasionally a moment of indecisiveness.

If a reasonable chassis complemented all of the above you might find yourself registering the new XF as merely a fine saloon, but the new XF has a quite brilliant chassis, and it therefore demands your full attention.

There is a combination of four elements working in harmony: the aluminium front double-wishbone suspension, the new 'integral link' rear suspension shared with the XE, adaptive dampers, and the latest generation of Bosch's electrically assisted power steering.

The integral-link setup differs from a regular multilink layout by including a fifth link in the form of a small, vertical attachment. This enables the effective separation of the longitudinal and lateral loads on the rear suspension. The large

bushes on the subframe that handle the longitudinal loads are softer, to the benefit of ride comfort, while the remainder are firmer for greater control of camber. In practice this translates to a car that rides with uncanny pliancy but outstanding poise, whatever bumps, ridges, crests or compressions are thrown at it. The steering is excellent for an electric rack, too, with delicate on-centre feel, natural weighting on lock and even some quiet but reliable feedback from the road surface.

The XF is one of those cars that goads you into pushing it ever harder, to the point where its tyres relentlessly squeal, yet still it finds grip, still it turns in thanks to effective torque vectoring, remaining malleable and adjustable on the limit. A glance later at the lack of wear on the tyres is evidence, if needed, that the car works its rubber extremely effectively even under severe provocation. The brakes are stubbornly resilient, too.

The XFS is a thoroughly enjoyable car to drive. Just imagine what Jaguar might be able to achieve with a new R version. ■

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Specification __

Engine V6, 2995cc, supercharger **CO2** 198g/km Power

375bhp @ 6500rpm

Torque

332lb ft @ 4500rpm

🕒 Outstanding ride and handling balance, resilient brakes, inviting interior 📮 Engine lacks appeal; gearbox calibration

0-62mph 5.3sec (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (limited) **evo** rating Weight

1635kg (233bhp/ton)

★★★☆ Basic price£49,945

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GIUGIARO





DMS McLaren 650S

Test location: Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground, Leicestershire GPS: 52.492425, -1.126782

IT IS NOT A RATIONAL person who requires their McLaren 650S to be even more accelerative than it already is. Nonetheless, Southampton-based DMS – well aware that rationality can be a finite commodity in the world of the privately owned supercar – has found its way into the McLaren's ECU and squeezed yet more power from the 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8.

The results are 720bhp and 568lb ft of torque, increases of 79bhp and 68lb ft over the factory car. The curves have been bolstered throughout the rev range, too, with a significant hike in torque output at 4500rpm. The on-paper gains are sizeable and in practice the DMS-tuned 650S feels even more explosively accelerative than the already rampant standard car.

Throttle response is pretty sharp for a turbocharged unit, but like the factory version there is a brief pause before the full force of the uprated engine is felt. From around 2800rpm it begins pulling with real muscularity and the strength of the mid-range is staggering. In any of the lower three gears traction at the rear wheels will likely have been blown away by 5000rpm, even in the dry.

With the red line still set at 8400rpm there is extraordinary reach to this engine. Where most turbocharged powertrains would be asking for a new gear, this V8 has a further 2000rpm to offer. Beyond 7500rpm the power curve flattens - no changes there, then - but by using the full 8400rpm you can hold a gear as you approach a braking zone rather than be forced to shift up, and you'll also drop the engine back into its sweet spot when you do call for the next cog. The standard engine is a mighty thing, but in this state of tune it becomes the car's dramatic centrepiece.

The upgrade, which is also

Power

720bhp @ 7650rpm

Electronic trickery teases Ferrari F12-rivalling power from the McLaren 650S while making it more of a drivers' car



available on the 12C, has been in development for a number of years and was tested on DMS's own car for three months before being offered to customers. According to company founder Rob Young, the drivetrain can handle the extra power, with several customer cars undertaking trackdays and European driving holidays without any problems.

As well as bolstering the power and torque outputs, the DMS upgrade also enables left-foot braking. In standard tune the ECU will cut power when it senses any overlap in pedal application, but the

new software overrules that safety function to allow the driver to trim out the chassis' in-built low-speed understeer. As Young says, it's more in keeping with what an advanced driver would want.

At £4800 this is a very costly software upgrade. That can be attributed to the complexity of the McLaren's ECU and the time and expense that has gone into accessing it, as well as the relatively modest sales volumes anticipated. Included in DMS's three-year aftercare package is a no-cost reinstallation of the upgrade should a dealer flash the ECU back to the factory settings, plus the option to temporarily revert to the standard map, should the owner wish it, again at no extra cost.

For some people supercar ownership is a real-life game of Top Trumps. The DMS 650S is undoubtedly a star card. **Dan Prosser** (@TheDanProsser)

Specification .

Engine CO2 V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo n/a

568lb ft @ 5100rpm

🛂 Software upgrade makes the engine a dramatic, exciting centrepiece 📮 Expensive for a massaged ECU Torque

0-62mph 2.98sec (claimed) Top speed 211mph (claimed)

evo rating Weight 1428kg (512bhp/ton) **** Basic price £4800 (upgrade)



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Your perfect three-car garage? Child's play, says Meaden. What you really want is to identify your automotive soulmate

I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY WE'VE ALL played the Lottery Win Garage game. Well, you've got to be prepared, right? And if you've indulged in the notion of unlimited riches, then most likely you've also drilled down into that fantasy a little further with the tougher – some say impossible – Ultimate Three-Car Garage conundrum.

Perhaps I've been spending too much time alone in cars recently, but I think I've refined this four-wheeled quandary to the point of infuriating, Zen-like simplicity. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you the perplexing One Car For Life challenge, or OCFL, for short.

Before you write off the rest of your day/weekend/life to a tireless quest for the answer, I'll furnish you with the rules. Oh no, that's right, there aren't any. Well, save for the fact that The Chosen One has to be road legal, but it needn't be brand

new or your everyday car for menial work or family-related duties. All it has to do – and I stress the 'all' bit – is bring you closer to complete driving fulfilment than any other car money can buy. Simple as that.

The more cynical amongst you will think this is the part where I inevitably type: 'Of course, my OCFL could *only* be a Porsche 911.' In all honesty, the 911 is one of the first cars that entered my head. I love them.

The first time I drove one it blew me away, and in the years that have followed I've fallen further and further under the 911's spell. And then there's the small matter of me owning one. Yet despite all this, my OCFL is not a Porsche.

As I've discovered, the beauty of the OCFL dilemma is that despite the fact you don't need to rely on your choice to do anything other than fill you with joy, it's not skewed by the lure of limitless exotica. In fact, if my experience is anything to go by, it steers you away from it. That said, I did fleetingly entertain the notion of selecting a car so precious and beautiful – an Aston Martin DB4 Zagato, in case you're wondering – that I'd display it like a piece of art in my living room rather than drive it. I still rather like that idea, actually, though I'm not sure Mrs M would be so keen.

As is always the way with these fantastical thought processes, you get swayed by all kinds of outside influences. For example, I just happen to have spent a few days in the company of an E92 M3 and could quite easily champion that as a strong OCFL contender. It's handsome as hell, fast as, er, it's *fast*, boasts four seats and has one of the finest engines you'll ever experience. It really does cover all the bases. For a moment I thought the choice had been made, but then off my mind wandered once more, random Meaden brainwaves taking me away from the fabulous but perhaps too

mainstream M3 to an altogether different place. A place called Caterham Seven.

Like the 911, the Seven and I go back a long way. My earliest memories are in black and white (yes, I'm that old): the single-page advert Caterham Cars used to take in every issue of *Motorsport*. I was fascinated by the spindly little machine and its ability to humble far more powerful machinery, and could only wonder at what it might be like to drive. It was a question that remained unanswered until 1993 when, by then in my first full-time magazine job, I was invited to get my race licence and take part in a round of the Caterham K-series Roadsport championship at Cadwell Park. That day – my first race and my first time in a Seven – remains one of the brightest highlights in a charmed life crammed with countless amazing experiences.

I've driven innumerable Sevens since, but the feeling always

'All your chosen car has to do is bring you **closer to complete driving fulfilment** than any other car'

remains the same. Nothing connects me more completely to what it is I love about driving than sitting behind the wheel of a Caterham. So much of the experience is unique. The intimacy of the cockpit and your proximity to the road and the elements, the modesty and simplicity of the recipe and the purity of the car's responses. They're actually rather comfortable cars once you're in, too, which means the only limit on how far you can drive is your frame of mind. Just ask Colin 'Geneva-and-back' Goodwin.

No, there really is nothing like a Seven. And while it's true to say the more powerful and manic the model, the more intense the thrill you experience, the essence of what it is that makes these quirky, anachronistic cars so special is as readily accessed in the 79bhp Seven 160 as it is in the mind-bending, 310bhp 620R. Me? I'd have a K-series R500 with windscreen, sidescreens and a roof, for maximum usability. One day I'll have (another) one, but for now just knowing is enough. Such is the inner calm that comes from identifying your OCFL. Try it for yourself. You won't get any work done until you've arrived at your answer, but what price motoring enlightenment?

@DickieMeaden

Richard is a contributing editor to **evo** and one of the magazine's founding team



2015's revised and updated collection of four outstanding COSC-certified Chronometers celebrates the first Grand Prix races established during the early pioneering years of motorsport, when courageous drivers in their temperamental machines put life and limb at risk for glory, fame and occasionally, riches.



Petrolhead

by RICHARD PORTER



The worst engine layout ever to grace an engine bay? Porter has a convincing argument for a perhaps unexpected choice

WHEN HE WAS STILL EVO GUV'NOR AND

before he went to live in a garage, Harry Metcalfe once let me drive his Ferrari 550, listened patiently to my enthusiasm for it, and then sagely observed that 'there's nothing like a V12'. He was right. I

was thinking this again recently while driving an Aston Martin Rapide, which is an easily overlooked but deeply loveable car with looks to make you swoon and the dynamic chops to be fun. Most of all, it has a V12 that is rich and torquey at the bottom end and wonderfully, wailingly powerful at the top. It's a delight, as V12s tend to be in all their forms, from the sleeping baby silence of an old Jag XJ12 to the howling wolf heroics of a Lamborghini

Aventador. They may be big and juicy but the V12 could be the greatest engine format in the world. So here's a trickier one: what's the worst?

Actually, that's easy. It's the V6. No, really. Put it this way, can you think of anything worse? Let's work through this, starting at the bottom. The worst engine isn't the one-cylinder because I find the noise made by dumper trucks amusing. I probably wouldn't if the same engine was in a car, but that never happens so let's move briskly on to two cylinders, in the flattened format of a 2CV or the in-line layout of the current Fiat TwinAir.

Either way, a delightful, fluttery soundtrack comes for free, giving these engines real personality. Also, by being tiny yet gutsy they have a quality that's as desirable in a little engine as it is in a small dog; they're plucky. The same applies to in-line threes.

Which moves us on to in-line fours, one of the most common engine formats and sometimes the most reviled. Disdain for the straight-four is understandable when you remember some of the joyless sloggers fitted to family cars 30 or 40 years ago, but when it's good, the humble four can be terrific. Ford BDA terrific. Honda K20A terrific. Vauxhall 20XE terrific. Like beer, pop music and the line-up of the Spice Girls, the four can range from absolutely delightful to utterly ghastly, and all points in between. This doesn't apply to boxers and flat-fours, which are usually just delightful.

Likewise, in-line fives, which sound nice and pull well. Even the diesel one that lived for a while in some Land Rovers. And these qualities also apply to the five's conjoined cousin, the V10. It's a bit weird, a bit lumpy, but there's something lovely about this layout, especially if it's in a Carrera GT and sings like an early '90s F1 car.

We'll skip over sevens and nines, since no one experiences those unless they drive a radial-engined aeroplane, and split the difference with the eight. Sadly, we're unlikely to see the straighteight in a car again, since meeting crash regs alone would make the car 100-feet long, so our eight experience is in a vee shape. And V8s are brilliant. From the last M3 to the original Range Rover, the Ferrari 458 Speciale to the Pontiac GTO, the V8 can be sporty, it can be civilised, it can be a slugger. It's hard to think of an angledeight engine that isn't full of personality, and probably quite a lot of torque. If you're bored of V8s, you're bored of cars. And, most likely, of life.

Which brings us back to six cylinders. The straight-six, of course, is a thing of wonder. From the hollow blare of an old Jag XK to the rich, bassy sound of one of BMW's finest, the straight-six is a marvellous thing. It's smooth, it's hearty, it has real character. In fact, it has everything the V6 lacks. Go on, name a great V6 engine. That's right, the 'Busso' V6 from Alfa Romeo. That's all

'It's hard to think of an angledeight engine that isn't full of personality. If you're bored of V8s, you're bored of cars, and of life'

> anyone can say about great V6s. What else? Maybe the 'Dino' engine from the eponymous not-Ferrari. And then, I fear, we're all done. There are lots of V6 engines in the world, but how many of them are memorable or loveable or sound joyful? Very few. Even the gravelly lump in the nose of an F-type is just an average singer with one hell of an autotune unit. At least a supercharger saves its arse from that other V6 failing, which is the limp bottom end. And this is from stuff coming out of respected Euro and Japanese car makers. Don't even get me started on those awful V6s you find in rental-spec American SUVs, which come in some weird capacity like 4.1 litres yet boast just 117bhp and a permanent tingle through the toe board.

> The V6 is the engine world's constant disappointment and internal combustion's eternal low-achiever. For every other commonplace engine layout you could spend all day thinking of great examples of the art. With the V6 you'll keep mumbling Alfa Romeo and then give up. It's simply not good enough, and that is why the V6 is the world's worst engine format.

> Of course, there is one sure-fire way to fix it. Simply weld two together to make a V12. ■

🕒 @sniffpetrol

Richard is evo's longest-serving columnist and is the keyboard behind sniffpetrol.com

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A good racing car is a fast racing car, says Dario, but there's an abstract quality that binds the best road cars and his favourite racers

ONE THING TO REMEMBER WHEN

you talk about whether a racing car is 'good' or 'bad' is that things are not the same as with road cars. We all love a fast road car, but they're really about emotion. I'm talking about feel and feedback,

comfort with involvement. These attributes are why you might opt for an Exige S1 instead of an F-type; why, ultimately, outright pace doesn't actually matter. But a slow racing car? Worse than useless, even if it is a beauty in the handling department.

Indeed, racing has a different set of parameters and priorities, ones that are inextricably linked to lap times and success. Ask someone why an F355 is their favourite car and they'll probably start with the sound of the flat-plane-crank V8 before moving on to the Pininfarina lines. Ask a racing driver to describe their favourite car and you'll likely get a set of digits, and impressive ones at that.

There is, however, something that both the best racing and road cars impart. Something that's often at the root of why we - enthusiasts and professionals alike - fall for them, which is confidence. It's the magic, intangible ingredient. It can override a crap driving position and poor visibility, and it's a quality that links all my favourite racing cars over my career.

Mercedes' D2-liveried DTM monsters of the '90s are up there. I've written about these cars before, but they were simply a joy to operate: V6 screamers and sparks flying from the titanium skid plate every time you bounced off a kerb. Crucially, they were also quicker than the Alfa 155s and Opel Calibras. The first iteration I drove was a modified street car, but the 1995 car? Just insane, and the 1996 car was a V6-engined F1 car with a body on top. You sat so low that the hump of the instrument binnacle was cut out and replaced with Perspex so you could see out! It was Can-Am for Touring Cars. Every week there would be new aerodynamic this and moveable that on the car, alongside adjustable ride-height (for ground-effect), traction control and ABS. The pace of development was absurd and money was spent like water.

Now, it wasn't the electronics that gave me confidence. They simply meant we went faster, but the car and I clicked instantly. I finished third on my debut and edged Fisichella at Mugello to take my first win later that season. It was a fast racing car, but it gave me belief, and I derived an obscene level of pleasure from driving it.

The second car in my top three – there's no order, by the way – is the Reynard-Honda I drove during the 1998-99 CART season. With more than 950bhp and massive downforce it was a totally different proposition to the Mercedes (it would do 245mph on some oval tracks). With such grip and power it was also incredibly

physical to drive, so much so that in certain corners the steering load would distort the spokes of the steering wheel - we'd have to chuck them out later. In fact, IndyCars are only just starting to breach the lap records that were set during that time.

What made the driving experience for me, though, was the 2.65-litre V8, which was heavily turbocharged yet due to some induction trickery had no noticeable lag. It was like driving a naturally aspirated car with endless torque, which, as you might have guessed, gave the driver plenty of confidence.

The final car is the Acura ARX-01a LMP2 I drove during the 2007 ALMS season. It was characterised by unholy levels of grip and excruciating discomfort. Because it was right-hand drive the

'It took an entire qualifying session to approach the Acura's limits'

pedals were offset by a massive 30 degrees. Combined with up to 5G that meant we had all sorts of problems with our backs and the muscles in our backsides after jumping out. We were limping. And that wasn't even the worst of it. The airbox was fitted with a restrictor that made it deafeningly loud, even with earplugs and all the protection. After a maiden class victory alongside Bryan Herta at the 12 Hours of Sebring, Tony Kanaan and I drove back to Miami shouting at each other the whole way. The next morning at breakfast some mates asked why we were still yelling.

But. My god was that Acura good to drive. More than three tons of downforce meant it took me an entire quali session to even approach its limits at Long Beach, where it managed to out-qualify the factory-entered LMP1 Audi R10 TDIs. The way everything was connected together with that car - the engine mapping, the downforce, the mechanical setup... it just felt natural to drive all the time and kept inviting you to push harder. Turn one at Atlanta was flat in sixth gear at a time when NASCARs took second. It inspired confidence like nothing else. In fact, the only limiting performance factor was how brave we were prepared to be.

Motorsport is about going fast. Indeed, for the drivers, having fun is a nice bonus, so in many respects the road cars we obsess about are the opposite. But if there's something that everybody wants, it's a machine that incites you to drive harder.

@dariofranchitti

Dario is a three-time Indy 500 winner and four-time IndyCar champ



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C400 » 400 BHP
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'500' 4,7 Bi-TURBO ALL MODELS » 498+BHP
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What's chipped your windscreen this month?



Conspicuous absence

Another excellent issue (evo 213), this one containing possibly the twin test of the year: the 911 GT3 RS battling it out with the 675LT. Both sound brilliant, and despite tackling the remit of 'ultimate supercar engagement' from very different directions, seem very difficult to separate.

Your test, however, ignores the elephant in the room. Not the one with the prancing horse on the bonnet, but the one without PASM, four-wheel steering, linked suspension or actually anything at all in the way of driver aids. The one built by a handful of blokes on a trading estate in Leicester. The one that won the 2015 Goodwood Festival of Speed Supercar Shootout: the Noble M600.

Perhaps if you had included it in the test you wouldn't have had so much difficulty deciding which car had the most nuanced interaction with the road. Or deciding which had the nicest feel to its paddleshifters...

Chris Stacey



The Letter of the Month wins a **Christopher Ward watch**

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Christopher Ward C70 British GP 1926 Chronometer (pictured), worth £599. Celebrating the birth of British motorsport at the Brooklands circuit 89 years ago, it is finished in a British Racing Green colour scheme and is one of a limited edition of 500 individually numbered pieces.

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Wet wonders

Reading Richard Meaden's views on the joys of driving on wet roads (Outside Line, evo 213) brought into sharp focus memories of a great drive I had only a few weeks ago on a very wet Sunday afternoon.

Driving my 1965 E-type on a run with a couple of chums in their XK120 and XK150, I found myself driving from the Brecons to Shropshire on soaking wet roads in pouring rain. The E-type, on its skinny original-spec tyres and with a fast-road engine (260-ish bhp) and no electronic aids or ABS, was an absolute joy as we pressed on at a pace. Feeling the car dance around, sensing every inch of grip or puddle depth. I couldn't have felt more connected to a machine.

How much fun can you have on a wet weekend in Wales? The answer is a lot.

Richard Carter

MX-5 defence

Your review of the new MX-5 (evo 212) got me thinking about how a large manufacturer like Mazda could plan a car for years and spend millions developing it, only for you to feel that it has missed the spot slightly by the time it makes it to production.

I suppose it's all down to pleasing the masses. As a VX220 enthusiast - so no stranger to compromise! - I think I would find the MX-5 a fine thing, but would ultimately consider it to be a big chunk of money to spend on something with compromise. Yet to certain other people it no doubt seems like excellent value for the ultimate 'sports' car they always promised themselves.

In fairness to Mazda, there are probably a lot more of the latter type of customer, and the company does need to make money or cars like this



Above: Dave Crammar reckons the new Mazda MX-5 is the car that it has to be

will never be built in the future, which would be a shame.

It's great that any manufacturer even considers making an affordable sports car, so let's take into account all the pressures the company must have been under and not be too hard on Mazda for what the Mk4 MX-5 is.

Dave Crammar

Going evo

I love cars – always have done. My parents would suggest that I was born with petrol flowing through my veins, but a succession of uninspiring company cars has stopped me from going full evo until recently, when a new job with the opportunity to opt out of the company scheme offered a glimmer of hope.

Ian Eveleigh's long-term admiration for the Cupra 280 (Fast Fleet, evo 211) helped me choose the car, even to the extent that I bought an exact copy from SEAT direct, with only one digit different on the number plate to lan's.

So now am I a fully fledged member of the evo club, and the fact that my car can mix it with the best real-world drivers' cars gives me a great sense of satisfaction.

Thanks, Ian, for giving me the confidence to make the change. And to any other readers thinking of doing the same: go for it! You won't regret it.

Matt Stretch

Like a boss

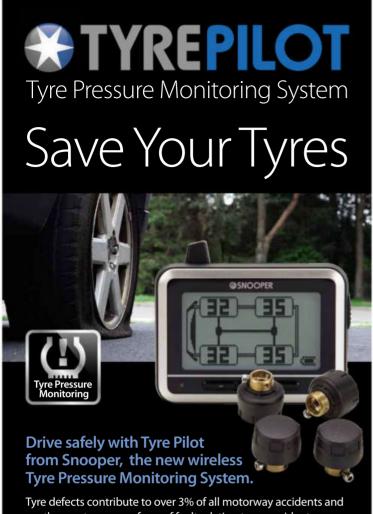
Am I the only one who noticed the division of labour that evolved during your Caterham Seven 420R build? The Fast Fleet photo (evo 211) shows the team hard at work, with editor Trott sitting down, seemingly updating Facebook on his tablet.

Come on, Nick. At least make a round of teas!

Richard Jones



Above: Richard Jones spotted our editor slacking off during our Caterham build



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Track-only hypercars

Ferrari has its FXX K. McLaren its P1 GTR and now Aston Martin its £1.8m, 800bhp Vulcan (pictured), so we asked you which manufacturer you would like to see build a track-only hypercar next.

I'd like to see Koenigsegg take a shot at it. It has just the material for it. Let's say a hybrid powertrain with Rimac's electric motors and battery. That'd be a peach. The power that the electricity and the Direct Drive system could produce would be just ridiculous.

. Juraj Kraljik

Lamborghini could make something even more extreme than the Veneno, with the hybrid components from the Asterion concept so that it has more than 1000bhp.

Ed Martinez

A single-seater Pagani Huayra with ramped-up power and extreme weight savings; a pure-engined monster with active aerodynamics.

Alex Paterson

'Pure-engined'? But the Huayra is turbocharged...

Trusty Valjoux

A properly stripped, caged wide-body R35 Nissan GT-R for me. Kevlar/carbon panels and 800bhp-plus.

Edfiasco mk2

Maserati creating a follow-up to the MC12 based on the current LaFerrari or FXX K would fit the bill.

Andrew Tate

A Porsche 918, just without the front motor.

Zac Youngson

How about a customer version of the Porsche 918 RSR 'racing laboratory'

concept? No batteries - just the original Williams-developed flywheel in the passenger seat.

Adam Hammond

Or a Porsche 919 relieved from all sportscar regulation constraints - to really explore possibilities...

pilouil

Mercedes has past form with the CLK GTR. How about it tried updating the formula with the GT? Not sure GT GTR rolls off the tongue too well, mind you.

Daniel Soutar

BMW, it's time for an M1 update. Base it on the i8 perhaps, and use the current 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 M5 engine or the turbo'd six from the M3/4 - with added lightness and power.

Andy Totton

A Ford GT track-only weapon with Le Mans-racer know-how incorporated but without the rules and regs.

Ethan Jupp

Tesla. We've already seen the 'normal' approach with the others.

Rich B

What about Jaguar doing something with the stillborn C-X75? Obviously not with the four-cylinder engine...

damo.666

A track-only Kia Picanto with a massively turbo'd petrol motor and electric 'torque fill' would be cool. Or a V8 Citroën Cactus with active aero.

Paul Dent

Join the discussion

Keep an eye on evo.co.uk or follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/ evomagazine) to participate in our regular Talking Point debates. The best comments will be published here each month

From the forums: community.evo.co.uk/forums

Thread of the Month

Manual v DSG

I've no experience of driving DSG, but have had automatics as hire cars in the past. What are people's thoughts?

DSGs and ZF auto 'boxes are great. I never used the paddles in my Scirocco much. In fact, I doubt I used them more than ten times.

Alex

I use the paddles on my M5 all the time, bar motorway driving. In the 330d, I never use them. Modern-era gearboxes are great and have come on a loooong way since slushmatics and SMG.

IanF

I sadly have to say that a manual is a bit of a chore once you have come over to the dark side. The nearest comparison is having the buttons for the radio on or near the steering wheel and then driving a car without them.

Sisu

I don't mind the thought of a DSG for an everyday car. Manual still has its place for a fun/weekend car IMHO. Mary

Using a clutch and changing gear is great, until the first time you flick the paddle to change up at full throttle. **NicDale**

Every time I have driven a DSG-equipped VAG product I have been left rather disappointed. I find the gearchanges to be a little agricultural in auto mode sometimes. In my experience it's not a patch on the eight-speed ZF auto that so many manufacturers use nowadays. It's a really superb auto and when in manual mode gives swift changes.

McSwede

Within the depths of my brain I have a list of things that annoy me. The list can only be described as exhaustive, and if written down in really, really small handwriting would reach to the moon and back, and back to the moon, and back again. And somewhere near the top of that list is people who are concerned that, in stop-start traffic, a manual gearbox and clutch will somehow be just too horrible to even contemplate. Get a grip, world.

Manual clutch is fine so long as you are the sort of person who also likes to have a man waving a red flag walking in front of your car.

Mark BT52



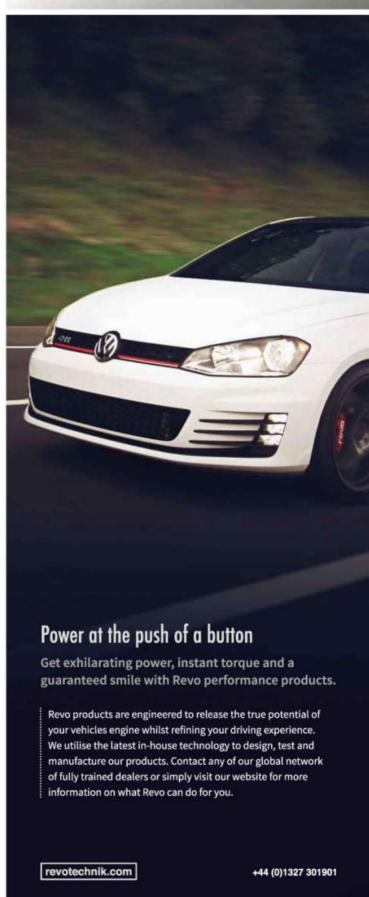
Thread of the Month wins a Road Angel safety camera & blackspot alert device worth £159.99



The originator of the best **evo** forum thread wins a Road Angel Gem+. The Gem+ automatically updates its camera database as you drive and allows users to share the locations of 'live' camera vans.

ROAD ANGEL





the Volvo V60 Polestar

SURPRISE PACKAGE



the kind of car you expect Volvo to produce. With 345bhp and 369lb ft of torque from its sonorous 3-litre turbocharged six-cylinder T6 engine, it's up there with the fastest estates around. And it's a real surprise package from a brand still associated with cutting-edge safety and Scandinavian cool more than outright speed.

Yet while this ultimate V60 is undoubtedly quick and capable, power and torque outputs and 0-62mph sprint times aren't the be all and end all for the engineers at Volvo's Polestar arm. They have also focused on making the driver feel confident behind the wheel.

This has been the core engineering philosophy throughout Volvo and Polestar's racing history – from the 850 T-5Rs driven in the 1990s by Jan 'Flash' Nilsson and Rickard Rydell in the Swedish and British Touring Car Championships respectively, to the modern-day 5-litre S60s campaigned in the V8 Supercars series in Australia. And it's been successfully transferred to this latest roadgoing performance flagship.

Get behind the wheel and fire it up, and the sound from under the bonnet is distinctly un-Volvo-like. So when you slot the uprated six-speed automatic gearbox into drive and floor the throttle, you expect an unruly surge to match this obvious potential. But it goes against the grain for Polestar to catch the driver out, so with power being fed to all four corners through a Borg Warner four-wheel-drive system, and a trick launch control program keeping everything in check, the V60 Polestar hits 62mph in a brisk five seconds flat with an equal sense of drama and control.

The changes to the ride and handling have also been designed to inspire confidence. You'd expect to feel every lump and bump in such a focused car, especially as the springs are 80 per cent stiffer than on a V60 R-Design. But Polestar spent two months working with the experts at Öhlins developing a highly sophisticated new passive damper. Featuring dual-flow technology, each damper unit incorporates a secondary valve for rebound. This allows the damper to absorb heavy blows, countering the stiff springs, but ensures a rapid response on the rebound stroke, keeping the tyre in contact with the road. The result is impeccable body control with none of the usual compromises on comfort. And owners looking to personalise the car to their driving style can ask their dealer to tweak the settings.

The V60 Polestar runs on bespoke 8 x 20-inch rims wearing Michelin Pilot Super Sport rubber. These 245-section tyres deliver prodigious grip, while response through the



'POLESTAR'S MAIN FOCUS HAS BEEN MAKING THE DRIVER FEEL CONFIDENT'

Above: Rebel Blue paint is a Polestar signature, but you can spec black, white or silver if you fancy a Q-car vibe. **Below:** bespoke 20-inch wheels wear Polestar logos, as do the sixpiston Brembo brake calipers



electrically assisted steering, with its three modes, is improved by a carbonfibre-reinforced front strut brace, all of which combines to give the V60 Polestar a reassuring, predictable feel in corners. Add updates to the stability control and ABS software, plus the fitting of huge 371mm Brembo front discs as part of a brandnew performance braking system – which provides powerful, consistent stopping power – and there will never be any surprises.

The enhanced driver appeal even extends to the heated leather and Alcantara seats, which are some of the best in the business. They provide a great balance of comfort and support, and offer a wide range of electric adjustment.

And the seats are just the tip of the iceberg for equipment. Polestar wants this V60 to be a performance car you can drive every day – you still get a 430-litre boot, after all – so it's fitted with every conceivable extra as standard, from

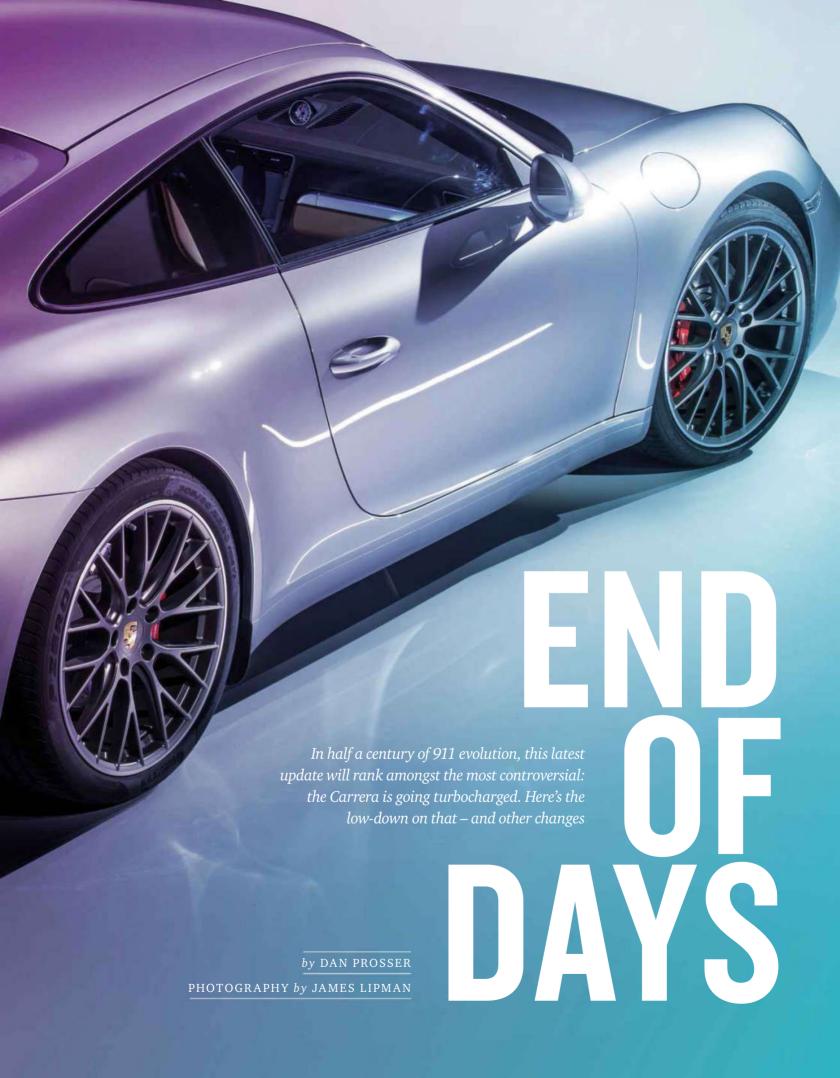
a 650W, 12-speaker Harman/Kardon sound system to Volvo's comprehensive IntelliSafe package of safety innovations.

It's a complete package, so unlike with many of the V60 Polestar's rivals there is no need to wade through a long list of options to find the best spec. The only choice you'll need to make here is between the stunning Rebel Blue paintjob and the more subtle black, white or silver alternatives.

But whichever colour you choose, from the driving seat the Volvo V60 Polestar will stand out for its compelling balance of power, handling agility and comfort. It's a surprise package and the high-performance estate you'll want to enjoy 365 days a year, no matter what the weather or conditions.

For more information on the V60 Polestar, visit www.volvocars.com/uk/v60polestar





R ERHARD MÖSSLE WOULD

rather let the car do the talking. On more than one occasion during our 48-minute interview I try to draw the senior Porsche engineer into making bold, cocksure claims for this revised and updated 911, but each time he simply replies: 'You will see when you drive it.

- had much to prove against a backdrop of such apprehension, this is it. The 911 Carrera is now turbocharged. In closing the book on five decades of tradition, Porsche has jabbed the ribs of the sports car purist who – for three very good reasons – will wonder if this could be the beginning of the end. Immediate throttle response, a serrated exhaust note

and high crankshaft speeds have been central tenets of mainstream 911 engines since the original model arrived in 1964 and, owing to the fundamental way in which turbochargers work, all three of those principles could be at risk. Mössle's quiet assuredness, though, is more convincing than any conceited sound bite.

The current 911, codenamed 991, arrived three years ago complete with its own breaks from tradition, and this facelift is intended to keep it fresh and competitive for the final few years until a replacement arrives. The big news, of course, is the switch to turbocharging, although significant revisions have also been made to the chassis, bodywork and cabin. The facelifted Carrera and Carrera S will arrive in UK showrooms before the end of the year, in both coupe and Cabriolet body styles, with four-wheel-drive versions to follow within six months.

By introducing the new turbocharged engine on this facelifted model, Porsche has given itself a head start on the 991's replacement, which is due in 2019, and spared itself from having to develop a complicated new powertrain and an all-new platform at once.

Asked if he can understand the apprehension that some will feel about the move to forced induction, Mössle is emphatic: 'Yes, of course I can! The normally aspirated six-cylinder boxer is a famous engine in the 911, but we face some challenges, not only in terms of fuel consumption and emissions, but also from our competitors. When you look at our competitor cars, like the Mercedes-AMG GT S or other cars with turbocharged engines, it's getting harder to stay close to them with a normally aspirated engine.

Porsche isn't just responding to the ever more stringent emissions regulations set out by the European Union and other legislative bodies around the globe, then. It's also doing what needs to be done to keep up with the state of the sports car arms race in 2015, which, regrettably or otherwise, has reached a point where a naturally aspirated six-cylinder can no longer be competitive.

Both the new Carrera and Carrera S use an all-new 3-litre, twinturbo engine, still with six cylinders arranged in a boxer formation. In terms of displacement, this is the smallest engine fitted to a 911 since the SC ceased production 32 years ago, but in terms of power output the mainstream 911 has never been more potent. Torque output, meanwhile, has gone through the roof.

Both versions boast a 20bhp increase over their naturally aspirated predecessors, to 365bhp for the Carrera and 414bhp for the Carrera S. Peak power in each model arrives at 6500rpm, with the red lines set at 7500rpm. Maximum torque on each model has risen, by 44lb ft on the Carrera and 45lb ft on the Carrera S,



Right: new bumpers. headlights and wheel design help mark out the turbocharged Carrera, as do vertical slats on the engine cover and closertogether exhaust pipes (see previous spread)

resulting in 332lb ft and 369lb ft respectively – but it's now delivered from 1700rpm right up to 5000rpm. To put that in context, the prefacelift Carrera S delivers its peak torque at 5600rpm, which means the new model will be in a different league in terms of flexibility and muscularity from low engine speeds.

The turbochargers are supplied by BorgWarner. They're fixedvane units rather than the more advanced variable-vane items used by the 911 Turbo, and boost at 0.9bar in the lower-powered car and 1.1bar in the more powerful model. The intercoolers are mounted within the bulging wheelarches and are fed via the air intake atop the central engine cover.

With more power than ever, the 911 Carrera is faster than ever, too. The base model will crack 62mph in 4.2sec when equipped with the optional PDK gearbox and Sport Chrono Package; that's two-tenths quicker than its equivalent predecessor. The Carrera S



dips below four seconds for the first time to record a 3.9sec dash (again with PDK and Sport Chrono); that's another two-tenths improvement. Top speeds are now 183mph and 191mph respectively.

Fuel efficiency is another point of progress. With PDK, Porsche claims the Carrera will manage 38.2mpg on the combined cycle and the Carrera S 36.7mpg, which represent improvements of 3.8mpg and 4.2mpg respectively. 'When it comes to fuel efficiency, Porsche is clearly ahead of the competitors now,' reckons Mössle.

The benefits of turbocharging are very well documented, but so are the drawbacks. The mass market will equate more performance and improved fuel efficiency with progress, but it remains to be seen how cleverly Mössle and his colleagues have nurtured those less quantifiable characteristics that can make an engine truly exciting rather than merely effective. As Mössle said himself, we'll find out for certain when we drive the car, but it's clear that the engineering

'THE CARRERAS DIPS BELOW FOUR SECONDS TO 60MPH FOR THE FIRST TIME' team did make a priority of response, soundtrack and excitement. 'We tried to model a normally aspirated engine and avoid turbo-lag as much as possible,' he says. 'A lot of detail work has gone into the system to improve response. For instance, when you come off the throttle the turbos keep spinning, so they are running at a higher speed when you get back on the throttle. We also have a new sports exhaust system that sounds really good. Yes, it's different to a normally aspirated engine, but it sounds better than the 911 Turbo, more emotional.'

On the thorny subject of turbocharging, Mössle has the last word: 'I think there will be a lot of discussion in the next half-year about it, but [ultimately] customers will always want the faster car.'

The manual gearbox faces a similar threat of extinction to the naturally aspirated engine in the world of the performance car, but in the Carrera it lives on. Was there pressure to ditch the manual? 'We had discussions, of course,' says Mössle, 'because our manual installation rate worldwide is about ten per cent. It's a kind of USP [in this sector] now. It's not the fastest gearbox when you go on a racetrack, but it makes a lot of fun and that's important for us. This weekend I drove a Cayman GT4 and I didn't miss the PDK.'

The manual gearbox, still with seven speeds, gets new ratios to suit the new engine's power and torque delivery. It's also been beefed up to cope with the extra torque output, but the PDK transmission is unchanged, save for the ratios. Drive is still distributed between the rear wheels by a limited-slip differential – purely mechanical in the Carrera and electronically controlled in the Carrera S.

With a turbocharged engine comes weight. The new unit is 40kg heavier thanks to the turbochargers themselves, plus the necessary cooling and plumbing. Around 10kg has been offset by weight savings elsewhere in the car, but there is now more weight over the rear axle. As a result, weight distribution has moved rearwards by

half a percentage point to 38:62 front to rear, which has required a complete overhaul of the chassis settings. Notably, the spring and anti-roll-bar rates on the rear axle have been turned up.

The rear tyres are now 305mm in section at the rear on the S model rather than 295mm, while four-wheel steering has filtered down from the Turbo and GT3 models as an option an the S. At low speeds the rear wheels turn in the opposite direction to the fronts to reduce the car's turning circle (by 40cm), but above 50mph they turn with the front wheels to improve stability. With that added rear-axle stability the engineers have been able to make the steering more direct around the centre point, by 10 per cent, to make the front axle more responsive. 'We have more grip on the rear axle so we could go a bit sharper on the front,' explains Mössle.

The steering system itself is still electronically assisted, but Mössle claims it's been improved dramatically since the original iterations of 2011, with lessons having been learnt during the development of competition cars as well as the GT3 and RS versions.

The brake pads are now a little bigger to deal with the added performance, and Porsche Active Suspension Management is standard fit. The vast majority of buyers were specifying it anyway, apparently, and as Mössle notes, 'a sports car in this sector should have the best suspension technology available'.

As a direct result of the turbocharged power unit, the new tyres and the chassis revisions, the new Carrera S is six seconds faster around the Nürburgring than the outgoing model, posting a time of 7min 34sec. Impressively, that's the same time Porsche claimed for the 997-generation GT2.

Visual updates are limited to revised bumper designs, new headlight and LED daytime running light layouts, vertical slats on the engine cover, more stylised rear lights and a new placement for the exhaust tips, plus a cleaner door handle design and new wheels.





Above: optional steering wheel has a 918 Spyderstyle driving mode switch (just below the right-hand spoke); infotainment system has been updated and gains a multi-touch screen and Apple CarPlay

'THE ELECTRIC POWER STEERING HAS BEEN IMPROVED WITH LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE GT3 AND GT3 RS'



'THERE IS A SUGGESTION THAT THE NORMALLY ASPIRATED 911 MIGHT NOT YET BE DEAD...'



PORSCHE 911 CARRERA S (991.2)

Engine Flat-six, 3 litres, twin-turbo Power 414bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 369lb ft @ 1700-5000rpm Transmission Seven-speed manual (PDK option), rear-wheel drive, LSD, Porsche Torque Vectoring Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, PASM adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated and cross-drilled discs, 340mm front, 330mm rear, ABS, EBD Wheels 8.5 x 20in front, 11.5 x 20in rear Tyres 245/35 ZR20 front, 305/30 ZR20 rear Weight c1420kg Power-to-weight c296bhp/ton 0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed, with PDK and Sport Chrono Package) Top speed 191mph (claimed) Basic price £85,253 On sale December 2015

certain conditions to improve aerodynamics and therefore fuel GT3 for some time, although the new system is 3kg lighter and

PORSCHE AND TURBOCHARGING

to navigate the automotive industry's turbocharging, it's Porsche. The factory first dabbled with the nascent technology in the McLaren in the Can-Am series for several years, it introduced a turbocharged version go on to dominate the championship for two years. Turbocharging would become



A BRIEF HISTORY OF TURBOCHARGED 911s IN EVO



Far left: 993 GT2 (and a Viper) in evo 003. Left: 997 GT2 RS thrilled – and scared. Below: Metcalfe's 993 Turbo and year-2000 Xmas tree. Main pic: 997 Turbo a Catchpole fave



The advent of the turbocharged 911 Carrera might seem rather scary. A travesty, even. But a jog through the **evo** archive serves as a reminder that over the years some of our favourite 911s have had their induction forced.

Way back in issue 003 there was a memorable jaunt with a 993 GT2, and a Viper GTS-R, to Le Mans. David Vivian described the GT2's steering as having 'enough feedback to fill a book' and noted the bark of the Porsche's exhaust turning bellicose at around 4000rpm, just where it got into its stride. Justin Bell, who brought the Viper along, thought the GT2 was relatively easy to drive, but then he was sportscar world champion.

Those of you with long memories will recall Harry

Metcalfe running a black 993 Turbo (whose 408bhp will be overshadowed by the new Carrera S) in Fast Fleet for 18 months. The numberplate C8 UFO always seemed appropriate for the otherworldly speed that it was capable of, yet it also served as an everyday car for family Metcalfe, transporting children and even, memorably, a Christmas tree about the countryside. A more modern incarnation of C8 UFO, a 997 Turbo with a manual gearbox, would be something I would absolutely adore as an everyday car. Huge pace, surprisingly lairy, yet also remarkably comfortable. A wonderful thing. In more recent times, who could forget the incredible

In more recent times, who could forget the incredible 997 GT2 RS. The GT3 RS might be the purer option, but there is no doubt which is the faster. And the scarier. Andy Wallace famously got out of a GT2 RS, pointed at it and said: 'That, must be the best road car ever. The steering, damping and traction are incredible. And that engine... I mean, that is performance.' (evo 204)

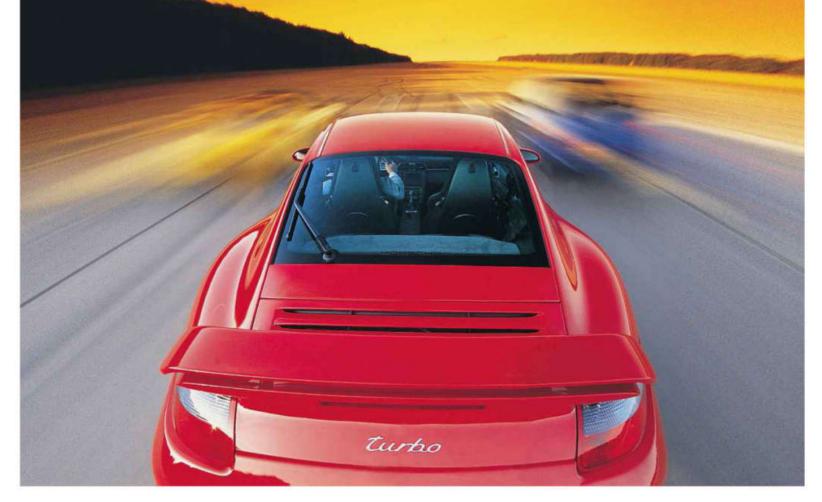
Then there are the oddballs – the Ruf CTRs, the GTIs, the 959 – all wonderful cars that we have adored in their own particular ways. And turbocharging is an intrinsic part of each one of them, whether it be the almighty shove of a Yellowbird arriving on boost or the runaway-train feeling as the second of the sequential turbos in a 959 comes in at 4500 rpm.

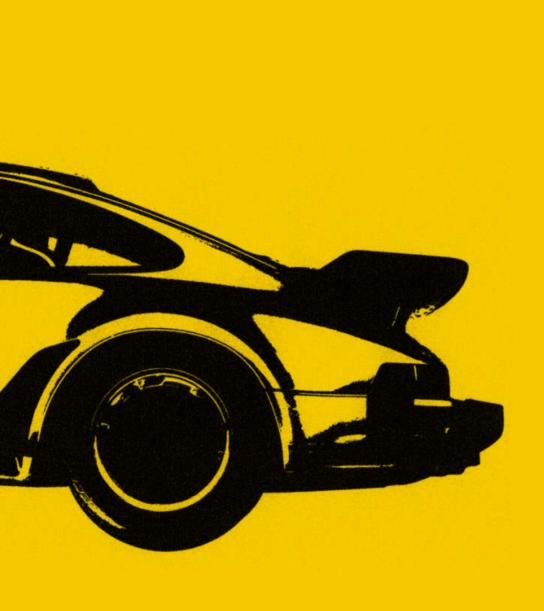
As this brief reminisce hopefully shows, turbo'd 911s have always been exciting and as much a part of **evo**

as any GT3. No, they don't have the soundtrack, but whether it's the slight terror of trying to get on top of a rear-wheel-drive variant or the bewildered awe instilled by the cross-country pace of a four-wheel-drive version, they certainly hold your attention. Almost every article we've written about a turbocharged 911 talks about squeeeezing on the power. Adding forced induction and really testing the legendary traction of the rear-engined layout alters the character of the car and makes you drive with a different mindset. Given what's gone before, we're rather excited to see what the 991.2 holds.

Henry Catchpole

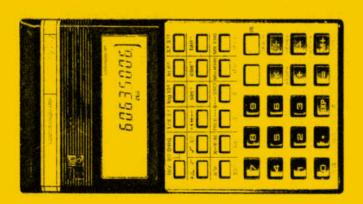








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"Indispensable – I'm hooked! But why aren't you charging more for it?" Gerhard Berger, 2015

"Knowledge itself is a power" Francis Bacon, 1597

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S THE FERRY ROLLS lugubriously in the swell on the Irish Sea, half a sandwich that has been shunned by a queasy passenger further along the row of seats slides gracefully down the long table in front of me like some rudimentary sushi bar.

A moment later it makes the return journey. The reason for enduring this mildly choppy crossing is a small sign. Or more specifically the different meaning attached to this sign on the island that we're heading to. Usually found atop a grey metal pole, our sought emblem takes the form of a white circle with a single bold black line striking diagonally across it, top-right down to bottom-left. Where we're going there's no limit.

Somewhere in the dark bowels below deck, sandwiched between a Nissan Primera and a small Danish campervan, is a blood-red slice of Italian aggression that really ought to have 2 Unlimited playing continually through its speakers (apologies to everyone that will now have *No Limit* playing in their head for the rest of the day). For anyone that thinks modern Lamborghinis have gone soft, the Aventador SV is a bare-knuckled uppercut of a riposte.

When the ferry finally docks in Douglas, I descend the green stairwell (that's not just a reflection on the pallor of the other passengers) and wander over the wet metal floor towards the silent riot of angles and edges. I don't think there is a wilder looking car on sale today, with even the hypercar triumvirate of P1, 918 and LaFerrari looking almost reserved compared to an SV. This thought is only compounded by the direct upward sweep of the scissor doors. In the gloom the word Aventador glows red from the wide sill, like an illuminated welcome mat.

I duck under the trailing edge of the door on my way to dropping across and down into the seat. Despite being trimmed in leather, the carbon bucket gives a hard greeting, the whole thing feeling incredibly unyielding on both spine and sit bones, making me shift and squirm as I try to find a comfortable position. I end up rolling up my jumper for some lumbar support. The next thing to do is shift your feet to the left so that they are resting on the offset pedals rather than doing battle with the wheelarch. Ergonomically the situation is saved by the huge range of adjustment in the steering column. If you're tall, it allows you to put the seat back and draw the wheel out to meet you, stopping a comfortable distance from your solar plexus.

There is a bit of a delay while the automotive Tetris that is the unloading process swings into action, but eventually the signal to disembark comes with a wide sweep of a boiler-suited arm. Flick up the bright red cover on the broad transmission tunnel and press the black button underneath. The door is still up and I listen to the power-drill whir of the starter motor, which continues just long enough to make me wonder whether the mighty 740bhp V12 might not catch. Then suddenly the cavernous belly of the boat is filled

with the huge, 6.5-litre *vvrrramm* of a dozen waking cylinders. If people weren't looking before, they are now. I reach up for the red leather loop and pull the door down before flicking the right-hand paddle and squeezing the accelerator to set the Aventador creeping slowly like a Komodo dragon towards the light. Fortunately there is a nose lift, so descending the ramp onto dry land isn't quite as wincingly tentative as it might otherwise be.

It always gives me goosebumps arriving on the Isle of Man, and this time is no exception. There is just something very special about this place – it evokes the same emotions I've felt visiting the pits at Reims or the roads around Pescara. You can feel the history, both good and bad.

As it is already mid-afternoon, we decide that we might as well head straight for the mountain section of the TT course, travelling the wrong way round the circuit to save some time. The island has still got quite a bit of the race furniture visible as we drive round the course. Some of it is permanent, such as the black and white kerbing, but some has presumably been left in place since the TT, waiting for the Manx GP and Classic TT, which are run at the end of August. It gives the roads a very peculiar air, almost like you've strayed onto a film set. Then the long-awaited sign appears ahead.

The road is empty and straight, running out to Brandish Corner (a sweeping right-hander from this direction). Two quick fingertip pulls on the left-hand paddle, revs hovering, ready, waiting for the sign... I pin the throttle. All hell breaks loose. The acceleration is shocking, not only from the initial punch that pushes my back violently into the seat, but also because of the noise as the revs rise much more quickly than I expect. The big Lambo still feels just that, too. It is a brute of a car and intimidating in its sheer size. It's not one of those cars that ever really shrinks around you. Up a gear and the rush continues, suddenly starting to feel very serious as the world outside the shallow, aggressively raked windscreen begins blurring faster. Walls and hedges become abstract streaks of grey and green in my peripheral vision.

A heavy lean on the brake pedal is reassuring, the steering gaining weight and the nose feeling precise through the wheel and pedal as the mass is thrown forwards and the front tyres take up the bulk of the strain. We've criticised Lamborghini for its carbonceramic brakes in the past, but these are fantastic. Out of the tightish left-hander at Creg, I get greedy with the throttle early in the corner, but the Aventador has barely believable traction and simply fires itself up the road with a force that feels even more shocking than the roll-on acceleration in a straight line.

Up at Bungalow I park the SV and wait for photographer Aston Parrott and road test editor Dan Prosser, who have been chasing me in **evo**'s long-term SEAT Leon Cupra estate. As I swing the driver's door heavenwards I'm struck by the noise of the massive fan situated in the equally enormous intake over my right shoulder. Sitting there with the car cooling itself, I'm still buzzing. It feels wonderful to have

'IT ALWAYS
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GOOSEBUMPS
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finally been able to experience the SV unshackled. After a couple of minutes the blue Leon parks and for the next few hours we set about taking some photos.

On the way back to Douglas, where a pint and a bed are waiting, I stretch the Aventador's legs again but not excessively. It just feels good to be able to drive without constantly feeling like I'm doing something wrong. Much of the time I'm not going particularly quickly, relatively speaking. I'm certainly not doing anything dangerous, just stroking the big Lamborghini along and enjoying the incredible sound that it makes as it digs deep and pulls hard from low revs. But even though I'm not remotely troubling the car's limits, the SV is so fast that I would be given a hefty fine and possibly a ban if I were caught travelling at these speeds on the mainland. The Manx police will still take a very dim view and haul you over the coals if they think you are behaving in a fashion that is in any way dangerous, and rightly so. It's just that speed per se isn't punished once you're past the appropriate sign.

EIGHT HOURS LATER, JUST BEFORE 5AM, WE

tip-toe out of the Kings Guest House (perfectly nice, but I'm not sure any royalty has actually frequented it) into a dark, wet and wild morning. Parrott is convinced that we might still get some beautiful light at sunrise. Prosser and I are less sure. The Aventador renders our tip-toeing pointless as it fires into life, and as we drive slowly through the sleeping streets it feels very firm, jolting and bumping over manhole covers. The SV has not been engineered as an all-rounder. I like that.

Once we're away from civilisation, the drive up onto the mountain is rather more timid than the night before as the wide, lightly treaded rubber struggles horribly with the patches of standing water. The SV's Dynamic Steering is actually well weighted and reassuring (the first time we've been able to say that about the system), but there is nothing worse than that glassy feeling as big tyres skate across a wet surface. It certainly shakes off any last vestiges of sleep that might have been clinging to me. To pacify Parrott, we sit in a rain cloud up at Windy Corner with droplets drumming on the bodywork for half an hour before calling it quits and heading back to bed.

Three hours later, with the mountain still shrouded in a thick white candyfloss, I suggest we head to the lower ground of Marine Drive. It's not a road for driving quickly (there's a 30mph limit in place most of the time) but it is spectacular. It also brings back good memories, as it was the first stage of the Manx Rally, which I was lucky enough to compete in during the 2008 season of the British Rally Championship. We spend a couple of hours out on the cliff tops and the SV certainly attracts attention. In fact wherever we park up during our two days on the island, there will always be someone wanting to take a picture, asking if they might be allowed to sit in it or just keen to talk about it. Everyone is refreshingly friendly.

Eventually, with the weather beginning to brighten, I hop back behind the Alcantara-trimmed wheel and set the satnav for some faster tarmac. In terms of derestricted roads, everyone knows about the









Clockwise from above: exhaust tips are strictly functional, and the noise they emit is loud; statue and mural of TT legend Joey Dunlop; so much for photographer Parrott's planned sunrise shot...

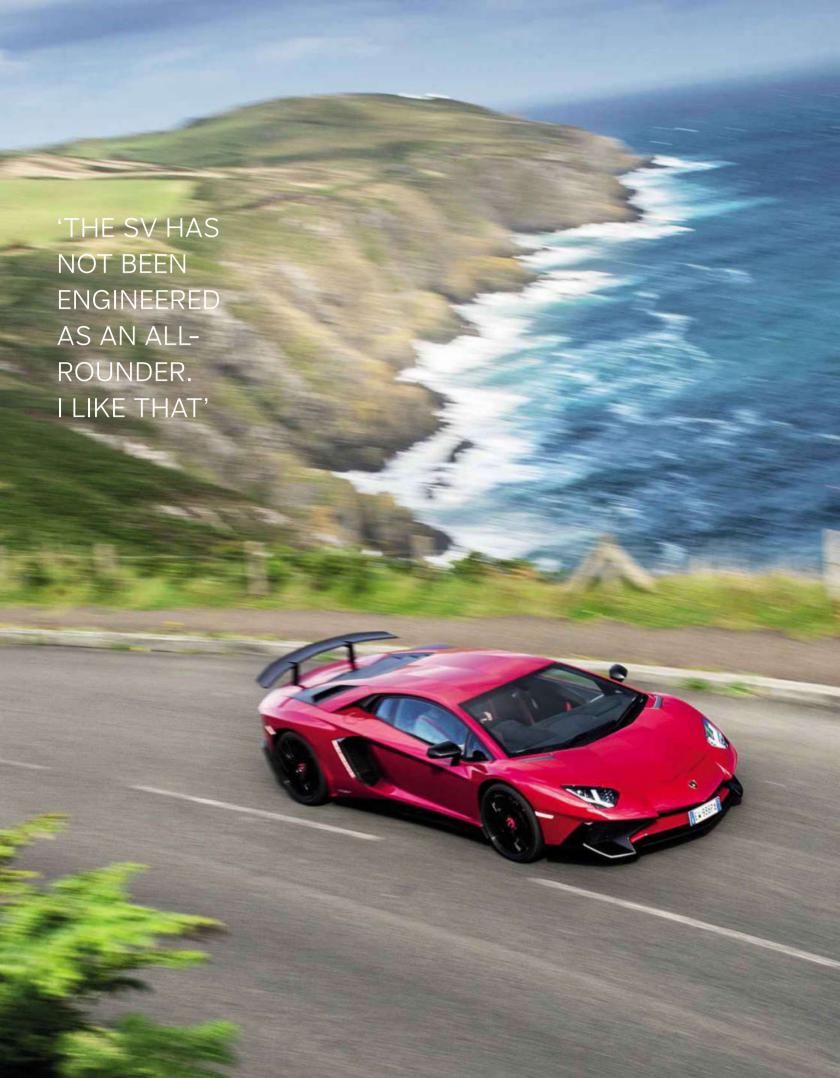
















Mountain Road across Snaefell because of the TT. But that's not all there is to the Isle of Man. There are plenty of interesting sections and one down on the southwestern corner of the island is the A36, otherwise known as the Sloc Road (and the Round Table Road and the Shoulder Road). It links Port Erin with Foxdale nearer the middle of the island but so do the larger A7 and A3, so the A36 is relatively quiet. Initially it winds along in the guise of a narrow lane with high, grassy banks, but then it opens out into a wonderful moorland blast. It sweeps, then climbs gradually, increasing in pace and smoothness until you're presented with a series of irresistible long straights.

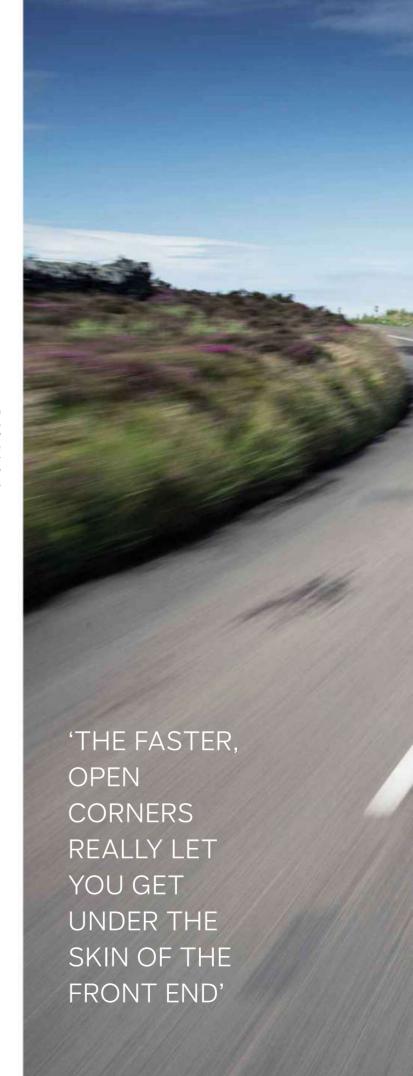
Here seems like as good a place as any to try the full Corsa mode. My memories of this most hardcore of settings on the standard Aventador is of it nearly snapping my neck on the first upshift, so I've been a little bit wary of engaging it on the SV. Trickling along in third gear, I press the button, feel the steering weight up a little more in my hands and then press the throttle pedal all the way to the bulkhead. Before you can say 'HANS device', the first upchange is necessary and, sure enough, there's a savage jolt as the momentary torque interruption pummels the car. It's not quite as bad as I remember and there is still enough straight to keep accelerating through all of fourth gear, so I brace myself for another. One eye on the revs, I feel like I'm in a jousting match, watching an impact thundering inexorably towards me... 6000rpm, 7000rpm, here we go, 8000rpm. BANG.

I brake and change down one gear (much smoother) for a fast left, then try one more upshift, but after that the sound of chiropractors rubbing their hands forces me to switch back to Sport mode. Even in this middle setting the single-clutch ISR 'box isn't seamless like a dual-clutch system, and so you need to pick your moment carefully. Change up or down while the car is loaded for a corner and you'll feel the weight of the engine straining to break free behind you as the shift pitches the car with the momentary loss of drive. It just means you have to proceed with a little respect and engage more of the thought processes you would use in a manual car, rather than treating gearshifts with the disdain that is possible in dual-clutch cars.

The faster, open corners up here on the Sloc Road really let you get under the skin of the Aventador's front end. Initially it's easy to feel intimidated by the reactivity of the nose to steering inputs, as it's perhaps the biggest single change in the SV's character over the standard car. There is a sense that if you simply turn in as hard as the Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres will allow then you'll inevitably unsettle and possibly even unstick the big rear end. On the road this does not feel like a good idea at all. Nonetheless, as you build confidence there's a growing frustration as you sense that by the apex of each corner you could have carried more speed. Strangely, it's in the faster corners where the SV starts to feel more manageable, giving the impression that it has risen up on its toes and is happy to be played with. You get a similar feeling in an R8.

Through a fast right I turn in hard enough to feel the front tyres scrub a fraction up to the apex. It's very

Right: IoM's open mountain roads are among the few places in Europe where an Aventador SV can properly stretch its legs





subtle and there's no need to snap the throttle shut: just wait a moment for the corner to open then get on the power and feel the balance switch rearwards as the huge power is sluiced predominantly towards the rear wheels. When you get it right you can really feel the load building on the outside rear tyre under acceleration, sometimes even edging it fractionally wide of the line scribed by the fronts. It's never enough to need corrective lock and it doesn't feel like it might snap away from you as it would with a rearwheel-drive car. It is just this beautiful sensation of driving hard but hunkered down on the limit of grip as 509lb ft is deployed to the road.

After a while spent on this quiet corner of the island we head back to Douglas for some superunleaded. I've been told the petrol station next to McDonald's has the best fuel, so also take the opportunity to indulge in the culinary equivalent of some 90-octane unleaded. Whilst we're munching on a couple of Legends, Prosser and I recount the story of the most famous cattle grid in rallying to Parrott. If you've never seen it, Ari Vatanen, flat-out in an Opel Manta 400, has a huge dose of oversteer coming out of a long left-hander in the Tholt-e-Will stage of the 1983 Manx Rally. This wouldn't have been a problem except for the fact that the car is heading towards a cattle grid. Again not a problem, but for the fact that the grid is defined by two yellow concrete gateposts and, in its

oversteering state, the Manta is wider than the gap.

'Ohhhhh...' says co-driver Terry Harryman as they approach the grid. 'Dear god,' he concludes as Vatanen only just winds off the opposite lock in time to squeeze through the gap. It's the definition of a heart-in-mouth moment and it's all there to relive on YouTube.

Obviously once this has been recounted there is only one place Aston wants to go, so we head over there to take a photo in tribute to the moment (although with slightly less opposite lock and requirement for blasphemy). The Tholt-e-Will road is fun but mostly a bit narrow for the SV. However, it brings you back up onto the mountain at Bungalow, where the tram tracks cross the road. Parrott immediately sees another photo opportunity in front of a huge mural of Joey Dunlop riding his Honda SP1. Another recommendation: if you've never seen the film *Road*, all about the Dunlop family, seek it out.

After that we spend a while longer doing static photos as the evening commuter traffic makes its way along the A18. It's fun watching locals pushing unlikely machinery in a way that you don't really see on the mainland. An elderly Mercedes E-class taxi, a Nissan Navara, a '90s Corsa, all taking racing lines as they hurry home. Then, just as the sun is setting, I set off for Ramsey, turning round in the car park just up from Water Works Corner, where the air ambulance lands during the TT. One last run across the mountain.

'TOUCHING
150MPH
ON THE TT
COURSE IS
SOMETHING
THAT WILL
LIVE WITH
ME FOR A
LONG TIME'



It's a shame that you can't pick and choose the different bits of the SV's three driving modes, as I think the steering is at its most natural in the relaxed Strada setting, although everything else (dampers, ESP, exhaust, gearchange) feels just fine in the middle, Sport setting. I let a gap build in the trickle of traffic and then head for the Gooseneck. The SV still feels big through the tight uphill right-hander, but I've got more confidence now and feel happy throwing it hard into the corner and getting on the power early. We're at the low white walls of Guthrie's before we know it and threading the red wedge through the chicane before running out onto the Mountain Mile.

It might not sound like much given that the SV is capable of 217mph, but touching 150mph on the way up to the 28th milestone of the TT course is something that will live with me for a long time. Even though it's clear as far as I can see (and trust me, my eyes are out on stalks) it feels life-affirmingly fast on an A-road. Then it's hard on the brakes, past Mountain Box and into Verandah, a sequence of three corners that you can take with a constant lock, the car drifting across the width of its lane as each apex comes and goes.

The setting sun is seemingly igniting the clouds to my right, the whole sky a patchwork of flaming, floating cotton wool. Past Bungalow, up Hailwood's Rise, then a trailing throttle through Duke's Bends, where I know there will be translucent blue flame sporadically jetting from the quartet of hot exhausts. The noise is utterly addictive. Loud and angry as only twelve naturally aspirated cylinders can be, it is quite probably the greatest soundtrack on sale today.

Out of Keppel Gate the tail just begins to slide a fraction but I know there is no need to lift as the four-wheel drive stabilises things. Exiting Kate's Cottage with a straight and empty run down to the pub at Creg-ny-Baa, I pin the throttle once more, holding each gear as long as I dare, revelling in the consecutive crescendos. The road dips down just as I'm about to go for fifth gear and although it looks relatively mild, the Lambo flies for a fraction of a second. The revs flare in unison with my heart rate.

I ease off on the way down to Brandish and let the world return to a more mainland pace. I'm so, so pleased that we brought the SV here. It's a car that needs speed to really come alive and show its best dynamically. The drama of it on the road is undoubtedly so much greater than on a track too. Largely (but not entirely) because of its gearbox it doesn't feel as modern and polished as some of its competitors, but somehow I can forgive it that because of the raw excitement the whole car is capable of generating. In a world where the outer limits of many supercars are becoming more accessible, the SV remains a very intimidating but thrilling proposition. Much like the Mountain Road.

LAMBORGHINI AVENTADOR SV

Engine V12, 6498cc **CO2** 370g/km

Power 740bhp @ 8400rpm

Torque 509lb ft @ 5500rpm

Transmission Seven-speed ISR automated manual, four-wheel drive, ESP

Front suspension Double wishbones, inboard coil springs and adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension Double wishbones, inboard coil springs and adaptive dampers, anti-roll har

Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs, 400mm front, 380mm rear, ABS, EBD

Wheels 9 x 20in front, 13 x 21in rear

Tyres 255/30 ZR20 front, 355/25 ZR21 rear

Weight (dry) 1525kg

Power-to-weight (dry) 493bhp/ton

0-62mph 2.8sec (claimed)

Top speed 217mph+ (claimed) **Basic price** £321,723

On sale Now

evo rating: ***







We've been waiting a long time for Aston to build a car like the **GT12.**

Too long, truth be told. The Vantage has always been ripe for road-racer treatment, yet in the ten years since its introduction Aston has skirted the issue of a full-blown fire-breather while Ferrari and Porsche have treated us to a succession of scintillating machines such as the 430 Scuderia, 458 Speciale and umpteen iterations of the 911 GT3 and GT3 RS.

Now that long-awaited car is here, albeit made in a strictly limited run of 100 examples and commanding £250,000 before options. They've been sold-out for months, too, which tells you all you need to know about the pentup appetite for an Aston like this.

Madness? Not really. At least it's not when you open a pit-garage door and find a GT12 – all wings and scoops and bulges, immaculate in white with dazzling orange, black and grey stripes – brooding in the half-light. It's a sensational device, no question. Whether it matches those looks with deeds is something we're dedicating two days to discover. Today will be spent at Anglesey's Coastal Circuit, where we'll knuckle down for a 'Leaderboard' lap time before cutting loose in search of fun, while tomorrow will consist of testing the GT12's mettle on roads we've got to know well while benchmarking the world's most brilliant sports and supercars of the last two decades.

Clad in sharper, wider, lighter bodywork – much of which is made from carbonfibre – the GT12 most definitely wears its underpants on the outside, but the Superman of the Vantage range balances beauty and brutality to jawdropping effect. The stripes and colour scheme might not be to all tastes, but like every part of the car they are exquisitely executed, in this case with perfect paint rather than cheap vinyl. Lightweight materials have been used throughout the car, most notably cast magnesium for the new inlet manifold and

torque tube (within which spins a carbonfibre propshaft), and titanium for the exhaust system. A lithium-ion battery replaces the old lead-acid lump while scope for added lightness comes from options including a carbon roof and front grille, and rear and rear quarter windows made from Perspex. Even the 'Wings' badges on the bonnet and tailgate can be had in machined carbonfibre. Everywhere you look, the fit, finish and detailing is fabulous.

In all the GT12 sheds 100kg compared to the V12 Vantage S, dropping its kerb weight to 1565kg. That's still chunky compared to a 458 Speciale (1395kg) or 991 GT3 RS (1420kg), but the Aston's breathed-on 5.9-litre V12 counters with a solid 592bhp and 461lb ft. That torque figure is almost identical to that of V12 Vantage S, but power climbs by 27bhp thanks to more efficient gas flow and reprogrammed engine management. Drag generated by the aggressive aero package pegs the top speed to 185mph, but unless you like stalking Autobahns that's a compromise worth making for the promised increase in stability. Huge carbon-ceramic brakes and forged aluminium wheels shod with Michelin's Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres (325-section at the rear!) underline the GT12's intent, while the stability control, ABS and three-stage damping systems have all been refined to up their game (and thresholds) to suit the increased quantities of power, torque, aero and mechanical grip.

The first time you start the GT12 is a moment that will live with you forever. Largely thanks to tinnitus. That titanium exhaust has added a brittle rasp and cackle to the rich and complex thunder that rolls from the inset pair of tailpipes. Each blip of the throttle is met with a violent yelp of revs and a clatter of pops and bangs to rival Chinese New Year celebrations. Even by Aston's standards this is a raucous car.





Quite where owners hoping to attend regular trackdays will be able to drive it is hard to say, but that would clearly be one of the nicer firstworld problems to grapple with.

The GT12's cockpit is a special place, with a lightweight-luxe vibe, extensive use of sculpted carbonfibre balanced with Aston's trademark leatherwork and lavish attention to detail. There are creature comforts such as air con and satnav, plus an optional Bang & Olufsen hi-fi that's surely one of the few things man enough to compete with the GT12's Brian Blessed-like voice. It all adds weight, but it also makes this car a much nicer proposition as a road car, especially on a road-trip to somewhere like Spa or the Nürburgring.

For now, though, our focus is Anglesey's 1.55-mile Coastal Circuit. Much to my relief the GT12 is far less intimidating than its looks and hair-raising exhaust note suggest. So, after a few steady laps to get dialled in, it's time to go for a time. It feels right to start with the suspension and stability control systems set in their respective Track modes, mainly to discover how effectively the Dynamic Stability Control system's most relaxed mode functions when you're working the car to its limits, but also because if it's good it'll win us a bit of time.

The GT12 feels rampant as you give it everything out of the final corner and along the start/finish straight. It really does rip through the revs – so fast that you need to be quick with the upshifts to avoid clipping the limiter. Second and third gears of the seven-speed single-clutch paddleshift 'box are devoured, leaving just enough time for a quick snap of fourth, then it's a positive dab of the brakes and a flick back to third for Turn 1. The fast left-hander needs measured commitment on the way in if you're to get a smooth run through the apex and flow to the exit kerb. The balance feels good – nose responding immediately but not too quickly for the tail to handle. It's a good start.

The hairpin is the first proper test of the brakes, but the 398mm front and 360mm rear discs feel fantastic, even during the initial turnin phase for the 180-degree right-hander. As in the fast Turn 1, the front end has plenty of bite, holding firm until you finally push through the limits of lateral grip. As the corner opens out you feel the tail squirm under the strain of transmitting all that power and torque, but the stability control just nips the slide in the bud before you need to apply more than a small amount of corrective lock. It holds you for a split-second longer than you'd like, but no more.

'The balance
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nose responding
immediately but
not too quickly
for the tail
to handle'

Right: rear traction can be a problem in a 592bhp Aston Vantage... GT12's bespoke colour scheme is painted rather than stickered on, which explains its £6995 cost





Turn three – Church – is ballsy; taken in fourth after the softest dab of the brakes. You need to fight the instinct to turn in too early while still being forceful enough to ensure the nose makes the all-important apex. The GT12's tail feels light through here. Not nervous, but you have to modulate throttle and steering well before the apex, dancing it all the way through even as the outside tyres kiss the exit kerb.

Once straight, an upshift to fifth sees the digital speedo flicker beyond 130mph through the daunting compression and kink before the track goes skywards into the critical braking zone for the tight left at Rocket. That rear wing must be doing something, for the tail now feels more planted and the brakes are brilliant, too, giving only the faintest pulse of ABS in the final metres of braking before the car dives hard left.

The run through Rocket to Peel is one big test of traction. The DSC continues to walk the tightrope impressively, but you can sense its workload increasing as the rear Michelins begin to wilt. The downhill charge into Corkscrew is an examination of the GT12's ability to simultaneously brake and change direction (it does so well), but the final corner feels scrappy as once again the rear-end can't find sufficient purchase to punch you onto the straight.

How fast? The first flying lap is the quickest – a 1min 16sec dead – with the next two times fading by a handful of tenths each lap. That's Nissan GT-R-quick, but two seconds shy of a 458 Speciale's time. The GT12 should be closer to the Ferrari than that, but I don't know where that much time would come from. The stability control system has been a brilliant aid, but it does feel like it's holding us back fractionally on the corner exits, so after allowing the tyres to cool down we have another go with DSC completely disabled.

The first few laps are initially smoother, with cleaner drive when you first get back on the power, but there's wheelspin and then some oversteer that needs balancing. It's fun and feels more like you're actually driving the car, but time spent sideways is not ground gained moving forwards. It costs time everywhere, especially through those difficult corners in the latter half of the lap. Try as I might, the times have dropped past lmin 17sec, grip and traction ebbing away in a fun but vicious circle as oversteer builds tyre temps and pressures, which increases temps and pressures. We'll go no quicker today.

How important is lap time? When you're chasing one it's all you can think about, but

with crash helmet off and coffee in hand I can concede the answer could be 'not very', at least to those buying the cars. There's no denying that the stopwatch is a revealing measure of ultimate pace, and when you're marketing a car as 'track-inspired' it needs to deliver. Yet making a car too challenging for owners to enjoy or ruining its ability to work as a road car would be folly. Unfortunately for Aston, and as the Speciale proves, blistering lap times, dynamic exuberance and on-road brilliance are not mutually exclusive.

The GT12 should be faster, then, yet later, when driving for the cameras rather than the clock, it's about as much fun as it's possible to have. The caveat is that tyre smoking oversteer is possibly the only thing less pertinent to life outside the motoring media bubble than lap times... Track driving done, we retreat to our hotel, buzzing with adrenalin but uncertain how the GT12 will deliver its prodigious performance on the road.

THE NEXT MORNING BRINGS BRUISED

skies and sodden tarmac. Not, it has to be said, the ideal scenario for testing a rear-wheel-drive monster. Especially one that, on track at least, has rather more *oomph* than it can effectively



deploy. I clamber into the GT12, fire-up its crazed V12 and sit nervously as the wipers slice back and forth across the windscreen and some warmth simmers through the raucous motor's vital fluids.

If the GT12 was a stripped-out, bare-knuckle track refugee, the commute inland from the coastal town of Beaumaris to the Llanberis Pass would be pretty miserable, but not only is this car comfortable, it's also mercifully benign, even as its size-12 boots stomp through the standing water. The single-clutch gearbox is a little hesitant compared to the best double-clutchers, but it's the best fitted to an Aston and more than fit for purpose. The throttle has a long travel and the steering is responsive but not overly jumpy. Everything works together so you can relax into the job of getting a feel for the conditions.

Funnily enough I've left the suspension and stability control buttons well alone, but against expectations, rather than snapping and slithering over white lines and drain covers before stammering into its electronics, the GT12 seems unfazed by the wet. Not with all-wheel-drive disdain in the manner of a GT-R, but in a supple, sorted, fluid kind of way. You're always mindful of mediating between torque

'You needn't

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from it'

Above: trackday remit doesn't mean a spartan interior, although carbonfibre and Alcantara feature heavily. Right: surprising wet grip and the softest suspension setting combine to give splitter-scraping roll and traction, but because the GT12 so readily helps you build a detailed picture of what each corner of the car is doing, how hard it's working and what it has in reserve, you rarely feel less than one step ahead of the action. Given the traction-related frustrations yesterday – and prior experience of the V12 Vantage S's prickly wet-road demeanour – this comes as a big and very welcome surprise. What's more, the GT12 is one of those cars that's always a real occasion to drive. You don't need to scare yourself stupid to feel like you're getting something from it. There's not that pressure to dig deeper, because so many of the things you crave are present from the moment you start the engine.

The rain abates but the roads are still wet when we head up onto the **evo** Triangle. The GT12 is little short of a revelation, both for the way its driver aids look after you without getting in the way and in the mechanical grip it manages to conjure from what looks like an unpromising surface. The steering – lighter and freer than in the V12 Vantage S but more feelsome – delivers bright, detailed feedback, so you can commit to a turn knowing exactly how much you have to lean on. Squeeze a bit more speed from the car and it will eventually yield to the mildest understeer. It's just enough











to signal you've reached the tyres' limits, and you can place the car with absolute accuracy.

The suspension is also beautifully judged, with real depth to the damping and a controlled pliancy that keeps the GT12 in sync with the road. Up here, where crests, compressions and awkward cambers conspire to tie an unsorted car in knots, that's impressive. As is the fact you can generate enough lateral load in the wet to gently introduce the splitter to the road surface, like a motorcyclist getting their knee down. Sport mode brings a welcome pinch of body control to keep the GT12's vertical movements in check as the road dries, allowing you to carry more pace. Track mode is too stiff for all but the smoothest surfaces, so it's best left alone.

If Anglesey was the environment in which to wring the GT12's neck, the road is the place to revel in its delivery. Opportunities to extend the V12 for more than a few seconds are few and far between, but it has huge personality. It's not frenzied like Ferrari's feral V12s – or anywhere near as powerful – but there's much to be said for its enthusiasm and accessibility. It needs revs to deliver everything it has, but because it gives its best at only 7000rpm you find yourself in the meat of its reserves more of the time. It's a fabulous partner and by far the most impressive

Aston Martin motor this side of the One-77's 7.3-litre V12. It's one of the most compelling internal combustion engines money can buy.

After a brilliant day's driving on the road, yesterday's mildly dispiriting lack of traction on track has largely been forgotten. Or at least put into perspective. Perhaps more than any contemporary super-sports car I've driven, the GT12 is more than a collection of numbers. Somewhat unexpectedly it has proved to be the most supple and exploitable V12-engined Vantage we've driven on the road, which is ironic given its leanings towards the track, where it's fast, ferocious and huge fun. That its best lap time is two seconds shy of its most obvious, able and considerably cheaper rival's will sting a few engineers at Gaydon, however.

The real frustration is that so few examples will exist. It's a fitting crescendo for the evergreen Vantage, but a reminder of what a shame it is that a GT3-style series production model, built in numbers and sold at a less rarefied price, was never forthcoming. Hopefully the GT12's success will encourage Aston to give us just that when the next-generation Vantage is launched. A car this good deserves to leave more than just tyre smoke and tinnitus as its legacy.

ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE GT12

Engine V12, 5935cc
Power 592bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 461lb ft @ 5500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed automated manual, rear-wheel drive, LSD
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, 398mm front, 360mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels 9.5 x 19in front, 11 x 19in rear
Tyres 265/35 ZR19 front, 325/30 ZR19 rear
Weight 1565kg
Power-to-weight 384bhp/ton

Weight 1505kg

Power-to-weight 384bhp/ton

0-60mph 3.5sec (claimed)

Top speed 185mph (claimed)

Basic price £250,000

On sale Sold out

evo rating: ★★★★

EVO SUPERCARS

The Book















Available 3 September 2015

MITCHELL BEAZLEY





Were I driving a rear-wheel-drive F-type R I'd have knocked the car into its wet-weather mode, switched the exhaust into its quiet setting and turned up *Test Match Special*. This AWD version, though, which boasts the same 542bhp and 501lb ft, feels sure-footed and secure – steady enough that I've actually selected Dynamic mode and taken control of the gears myself. Given the joys of the British climate, a more useable sort of sports car seems to make a great deal of sense.

Jaguar introduced a four-wheel-drive option earlier this year for a couple of reasons, one of which was to give the earliest F-type buyers – those reaching the end of their lease deals – something new to try. But it also wanted to appeal to markets where the climate all but rules out rear-wheel drive. And if a rear-driven F-type can be hobbled by an inclement British summer's day, it probably won't get far in a Canadian winter.

The solution Jaguar arrived at is a torque-on-demand system. In normal driving, all torque is sent to the rear wheels, but when the multitude of sensors detect any slip at the rear axle, as much as 70 per cent can be shuffled to the front. Naturally, this has low-speed traction benefits, but the system will also send drive forwards when the car begins to oversteer. Rather than dropping messily onto its stability control safety net, as the rear-wheel-drive car would, the AWD model should pull itself straight. The weight penalty, though, is 80kg.

The march of the four-wheel-drive performance car is well underway. With the industry adopting turbocharging almost across the board and the power race charging on unabated in all sectors, torque outputs are going through the roof. Increasingly, two driven contact patches are insufficient, and when hybridisation filters down from the likes of the BMW i8 to more mainstream performance models, four-wheel-drive will become a common solution.

Right: infotainment is still a weak point for Jaguar and the touchscreen in this latest F-type can be painfully slow to respond, unlike the car's turn-in, which is impressively keen

As somebody who was lucky enough to run a BMW M4 for seven months – through a particularly filthy winter - I have mixed feelings about that. On the one hand the purity of rear-wheel drive seems like a cornerstone of performance motoring that might be eroded for good, but on the other better traction would have made the M4 vastly more useable during those winter months. For a period I actually gave up trying to drive the M4 quickly because it was so comprehensively outfoxed by a slippery road surface. Like the M4, the reardrive F-type R is a severely traction-limited car, especially in low-grip conditions. So as I watch Gus, head bowed against the wind and rain, trudging along to a hairpin so that we can make a start on the action photography, I realise that the AWD car could be a far superior machine than its rear-driven counterpart.

The whole point of that torque-on-demand system is that this car should feel exactly like the rear-wheel-drive F-type right up to the point that grip is lost at the back. The engineers even dialled up the front spring rates by ten per cent to disguise the extra weight up front, so in normal driving you'd be hard pressed to identify those two extra driveshafts. With the stability control system switched off, the car will dart into a corner despite the wet surface, just as the rear-wheel-drive model does, and right after the initial throttle application it too will begin to rotate at corner exit. It's only what happens thereafter that distinguishes the two drivetrains. Whereas the two-wheel-drive car would then collapse into lurid oversteer, the kind that requires a side-step off the throttle and armfuls of corrective lock in tighter corners - or a recovery truck and fresh underwear in higher speed bends - the four-wheel-drive car will drift quite gracefully for a moment, then drive itself out of the slide and onto the following straight.

It's very compelling behaviour. You still have the

'THE CAR DRIFTS GRACEFULLY FOR A MOMENT THEN DRIVES ITSELF OUT OF THE SLIDE'





sense of throttle adjustability and playfulness, but without the wanton profligacy and fear factor. So the F-type R AWD is a convincing device, and with the clouds breaking overhead, the sun starting to shine and the roads drying very quickly, the day looks like taking a turn for the better.

But that's where the case for this car starts to unravel. An hour or so after those first patches of blue emerged above us, the road has dried completely and the F-type is starting to feel its weight. Rain tends to disguise the effects of unwanted mass, but with good grip I can lean on the chassis a bit more. There's actually enough support at each corner and sufficient grip - not to mention straight-line performance from that thumping supercharged V8 - for the car to feel quite sharp for the most part. But when the road sends one vertical input after another into the chassis, or when the corners come thick and fast, you can feel the car struggling to maintain its composure. The thick, cumbersome steering wheel adds to the impression of corpulence.

Jaguar claims 1730kg for this particular specification of F-type, but given that we've weighed a rear-wheel-drive model at 1800kg, that seems quite optimistic. In fact, with a driver on board and this test car's glass roof, I doubt it weighs much less than two tons, which is pretty inexcusable for a two-seater sports car.

Beyond the issue of weight, the car loses its sense of adjustability and playfulness in dry conditions. It still has the same super-responsive and grippy front axle as the two-wheel-drive car - although the extra weight up front has led to a little more low-speed understeer - but what's missing now is the option to balance the car on the throttle at corner exit. In the rear-drive car you can feel the driven wheels slip slightly under load as you drive out of a bend, which requires you to open the steering slightly. It probably doesn't even qualify as oversteer, but that impression of being propelled from the rear is what makes the twowheel-drive F-type such fun. In theory, the torqueon-demand system should make the AWD model behave the same way in that phase, but in practice it feels quite different. To achieve the same effect in this car you need lots of space and a moderately reckless attitude.

Ultimately, the four-wheel-drive F-type is less demanding of its driver in dry conditions and that makes it fundamentally less involving. That's not to say this is a dull and unexciting sports car; it's just not as much fun as the rear-driven car down a dry road. All of which leaves me scrabbling around for a way of saying that the AWD model is better in the wet but the rear-wheel-drive car is preferable in the dry without sounding either colossally patronising or catastrophically moronic. But I'm not sure I can find it.

Jaguar introduced a number of other updates for the 2016MY F-type, among them electric power steering in place of the old hydraulic





'IT'S ON DRY ROADS THAT THE CASE FOR THE AWD F-TYPE STARTS TO UNRAVEL'



setup. On turn-in the new rack feels less jumpy and hyperactive than before. It's also very naturally weighted and as precise as you could hope for, but after that first input the helm seems to go numb. At mid-corner it just doesn't do anything; there's no tugging at your fingertips as the front wheels arc across the road surface. It suddenly feels very digital rather than mechanical. The old rack was never the most feelsome, so take this as an observation rather than a regret. It's also a trait you quickly learn to live with because there's so much outright front-axle grip to lean on that you don't really miss the messages. If the front tyres were short on bite, that lifeless EPAS system would be much more of a concern.

Like on the earlier car, the low-speed ride quality is very firm indeed, but it does settle markedly with speed. This new car also feels better tied down over a three-dimensional road surface than earlier F-types; less like the first half-inch of suspension travel has the same spring rate as a chewed marshmallow. The improved body control makes it a more intuitive and confidence-inspiring car to hustle along a really demanding stretch of blacktop.

One of our big frustrations with the original F-type was its outdated infotainment system, which was clunky in its design and dim-witted in the way it worked. The new system is generally better, but in a world of ultra-responsive smartphones the Jaguar's touchscreen still feels lethargic. You can't just tap away at the qwerty pad, you instead have to wait half a second for each letter to register. Quite why a modern-day navigation system is so troubled by a tunnel on the M4 that it actually diverts you through Newport I can only guess, but it's the kind of annoyance that gnaws away at your affections for a car. And not just because it was Newport.

Those few frustrations aside, the F-type is now a more complete car for offering a four-wheel-drive system and, on the V6 models, the option of a manual gearbox. This expansive model strategy - various body styles, engine and gearbox options, two- and four-wheel-drive transmissions and so on - was inspired directly by the Porsche 911, which has had all the bases covered for decades now. So how does the revised F-type compare to the benchmark sports car at this price point? Turn the page to find out.



Hunter hunted

The AWD F-type has Porsche's fourwheel-drive 911s in its sights. On price, the Carrera 4 GTS is its closest rival, but it trails by 118bhp. Can the Jaguar convert its advantage to a victory?



LONG AFTER THE CLOUDS PARTED AND

the roads dried, a Racing Yellow Porsche 911 joins us in south Wales. It's a Carrera 4 GTS, which in terms of price is this F-type's closest rival from the 911 line-up – £95,862 for the Porsche plays £91,660 for the Jaguar. It's also the car that the revised F-type will have to prove itself against.

With all the changes that were made to the 911 when the 991-gen version was introduced in 2012 – among them electric power steering, a more even weight distribution and a longer wheelbase – the character of the venerable sports car changed. It suddenly became slightly less communicative, a little harder to read. This magazine's preference has always been for the four-wheel-drive 991s, which seem to muster up a touch more communication from their front ends than their rear-drive counterparts. And that would suggest this 4WD GTS is the pick of the Carrera line-up.

With six naturally aspirated (for now) cylinders to the Jaguar's supercharged eight, the Porsche is considerably down on power and torque – 424bhp with 324lb ft of torque at 5750rpm looks pretty healthy until you consider the F-type's 542bhp and enormous 501lb ft at 3500rpm. According to the claimed figures, though, the 911 is 240kg lighter than the F-type, which goes some way to wiping out the Jaguar's power advantage.

Porsche seems to have a better handle on electric power steering, because while this 911's still lacks the wonderfully detailed clarity of previous generations, it is more talkative than the F-type's. There's also more immediacy and responsiveness in the way the 911 finds its way down a road, its lighter kerb weight telling over undulations and crests. Step from one car to the other and you soon realise that the 911 is urgent and alert where the F-type is more relaxed and languid.

Much the same is true of their powertrains. The Jaguar's thumping V8 is a fairly uncivilised brute lobbing great lumps of torque at the four driven wheels. Aside from the slightly contrived exhaust note it really is a tremendously amusing engine, but compared to the 911's scalpel-sharp, instantaneously responsive boxer it seems better suited to hauling the Jaguar across great distances than pinging it from one corner to the next. Similarly, the 911's optional dual-clutch PDK 'box is just so responsive, whereas the F-type's eight-speed ZF auto – near faultless in isolation – feels a fraction off the pace by comparison.

On the face of it the rear-engined, relatively torque-light 911 shouldn't need four-wheel drive to be at its best, but when you find yourself exploring the very upper reaches of the car's dynamic ability – which it really does invite you to do – there's just more stability and predictability than you get with the rear-drive version. Whereas the four-wheel-drive F-type is more effective in the wet than it is in the dry, the 911 feels better when it drives all four wheels, regardless of the conditions.

On track you can still use the 911's rear-biased weight distribution to rotate the car into a corner then stand on the throttle and rely on the four-wheel drive to haul you straight. It means you lose none of the excitement of the rear-driven car, but on the road you can enjoy the added security.

Although these cars are so evenly matched in price, they share little in terms of their approach to performance motoring. In fact, driving them back-to-back is such an instructive thing to do because you quickly realise what divergent roles they play. In V8 AWD guise the F-type assumes the part of the grand tourer, more adept at ticking away the miles than it is darting between corners, while the 911 exists to be slung down a back road.

That's not to write off the F-type's sporting credentials out of hand, though. We just need to look elsewhere in the range. With the lighter, supercharged V6 engine, rear-wheel drive and a manual gearbox, the F-type becomes a very different sort of beast: responsive and immediate where the model seen here can feel heavy and indolent. Whether or not the more sporting F-type can better the 911 at its own game is a question that we'll answer on another day.

JAGUAR F-TYPE R COUPE AWD

Engine V8, 5000cc, supercharged **CO2** 269g/km

Power 542bhp @ 6500rpm **Torque** 501lb ft @ 3500rpm

Transmission Eight-speed automatic, four-wheel drive,

LSD, torque vectoring by braking **Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs,

adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Ventilated discs, 380mm front, 376mm rear, ABS, EBD

Wheels 9.0 x 20in front, 10.5 x 20in rear **Tyres** 255/35 R20 front, 295/30 R20 rear **Weight** 1730kg

Power-to-weight 318bhp/ton 0-62mph 4.1sec (claimed) Top speed 186mph (claimed) Basic price £91,660

evo rating: ★★★★★

PORSCHE 911 CARRERA 4 GTS

Engine Flat-six, 3800cc

CO2 212g/km

Power 424bhp @ 7500rpm **Torque** 324lb ft @ 5750rpm

Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch (option),

four-wheel drive, LSD, PTV

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs,

PASM dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs,

PASM dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs (option),

350mm front and rear, ABS, EBD **Wheels** 9 x 20in front, 11.5 x 20in rear

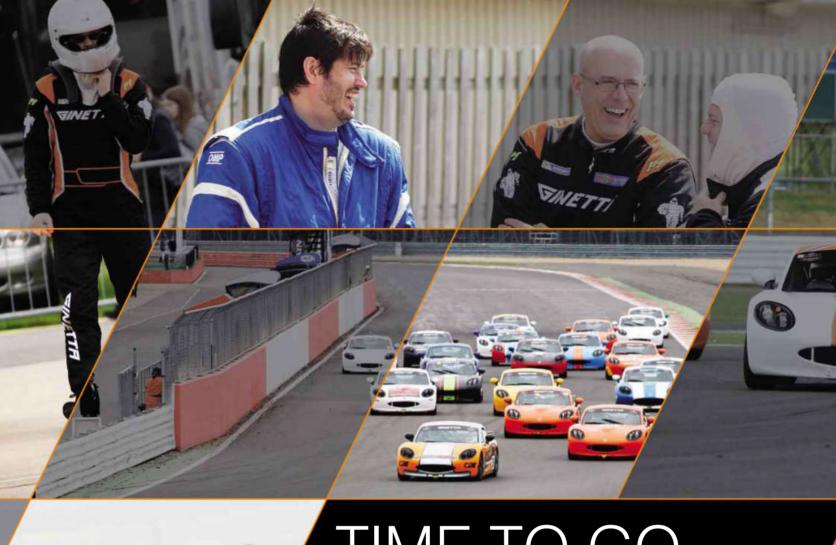
Tyres 245/35 ZR20 front, 305/30 ZR21 rear

Weight 1490kg

Power-to-weight 289bhp/ton 0-62mph 4.0sec (claimed) Top speed 188mph (claimed) Basic price £95,862

evo rating: ***





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BEST OF ALL, THE CAR IS YOURS TO KEEP! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

sure as day follows night or photographers being haunted by perpetual rain clouds, if you're a new track-focused British sports car, sooner or later you're going to have to go head-to-head with the Caterham Seven. It's the evergreen drivers' hero and history is littered with appealing and intriguing rivals that have ultimately fizzled out because, well, they're not a Caterham.

You sense that Zenos knows this intrinsically. Many of the people involved are former Caterham employees (or indeed part-owned the company!) and hold the Seven very dear. So how do you compete? The best answer is that you don't. You offer something unique and distinct. The question, then, is what does the Zenos E10 S bring to a relatively crowded marketplace? And regardless of its individual skill set, can it deliver the simple joy of driving that is so unfettered in the Caterham?

We've driven the Zenos before on the road (evo 208) and have been impressed with its feedback and easy balance combined with torque-rich power and an ability to up its game as you ramp up your own commitment. Today we'll see how it fares on track against our own Fast Fleet Caterham 420R and we'll also venture out onto narrower, twistier roads than we drove on during our last encounter.

First the relative specs. With an innovative extruded-aluminium central spine supporting a recycled-carbonfibre tub with a thermoplastic honeycomb core, the Zenos weighs just 725kg. It has double-wishbone suspension all round with inboard dampers at the front, and the midmounted engine is a 2-litre Ford EcoBoost unit producing 250bhp at 7000rpm and 295lb ft at just 2500rpm. The Zenos E10 S costs from £29,995, plus £1595 if you want the six-speed manual gearbox. A limited-slip diff is an option, but Zenos says the car is sweeter without.

The Caterham is tiny by comparison and lacks the engineering ingenuity of the Zenos. However, it's very light at 560kg and its 2-litre normally aspirated engine (also Ford sourced) prefers high-rev drama to easy torque. It produces 210bhp at 7600rpm and 150lb ft at 6300rpm. The 420 has the same list price of £29,995 when factory built, but the 'R' pack (which brings an LSD, a lightweight flywheel, upgraded suspension and several other goodies) adds £3995, while our car is also fitted with the short-ratio six-speed 'box at £1495. In effect the E10 S is around £5000 cheaper than the Seven when specced with all the juicy bits.







Caterham 420R v Zenos E10 S

CATERHAM SEVEN 420R v ZENOS E10 S









Left, from top: carbon dash in the Caterham is part of the 'R' upgrade; TFT displays lift the Zenos's interior; 420R has close-ratio 'box; E10 S's sticky Avon ZZR tyres. Above right: the moment of truth for the Zenos as we put it to the test on track for the first time



PERFORMANCE

Divergent as these cars might be, there's almost nothing in it over a simple drag race. The Zenos records 0-30mph in 1.7sec, which says much for its strong traction. It needs around 4000rpm for a peachy launch – any more and the tyres dissolve into wheelspin – and requires sensitivity to keep the rear tyres gripping on the first gearchange, but the gearshift itself is light and fast and the engine has a huge spread of performance. The Zenos powers on to 60mph in 4.2sec after standstill and cracks 100mph in 10.5sec. On our two-mile straight it records a top speed of 138.8mph, by which time it's pretty blustery but rock solid in terms of stability.

The Caterham should have an initial advantage thanks to its low mass and it not having to manage 295lb ft. Indeed, it needs a bit of brutality to fully exploit. Grit your teeth, dial up 6000rpm, sidestep the clutch and then



pray you can negotiate the obstructive, heavy first-to-second shift. Do so and the 420R records an identical 0-30mph time of 1.7sec. At 60 it's fallen behind the E10 S by a single tenth, and it loses another when it records 0-100mph in 10.7sec. It feels faster – manic and exciting where the Zenos is quiet, almost serene – but the data shows it to be slightly slower. The Seven's (small) barn-door aerodynamics see it run out of puff at a still impressive 136.4mph.

Under braking the Caterham steals back any advantage the Zenos has claimed, pulling up from 100 to 10mph in 4.0sec and 93.4 metres. (We've omitted the 10-0mph portion, as this is where inconsistencies can occur without ABS.) The E10 S needs 4.6sec and 110 metres. Its short-travel brake pedal feels terrific initially, but as the speeds drop below 30mph it's very tricky to avoid locking wheels dramatically.

In truth, the pure performance of each is extremely close. We won't find our winner here. To the track, then. One with corners.

'The Zenos
is a huge
amount of
fun and really
satisfying.
It's fast,
accessible
and rewards
smoothness'

ON TRACK

You step over the bodywork, onto the seat and slither down into the Zenos. The driving position is perfect, nice and low so you feel cocooned but never claustrophobic, and the grippy, well-located pedals have that substantial feeling that race cars always get so right. Dead ahead is a small, suede-rimmed steering wheel and a bespoke electronic display. The revs are displayed in a bar running left to right, with a digital speed display and gear indicator below. In the middle of the dash there's another screen with more info displayed in the same clear, stylish typography. It's impressive and lifts an otherwise pretty workmanlike space. The gearlever with familiar Ford knob is elevated on the high central tunnel, like the sequential shifter of an old Touring Car.

We're at Blyton Park in Lincolnshire and conditions are cool but dry. I know the circuit



well but the Zenos is taking some getting used to. The main reason is that the EcoBoost engine is so quiet. Wearing a crash helmet you sense rather than hear it climbing towards the limiter and feel a subtle misfiring sensation when you inadvertently run into it. The turbocharged unit feels seriously strong and throttle response is excellent, but I'm not sure you could call it genuinely exciting. At least the fairly long throw but light shift of the 'box can be slammed through quickly and heel-and-toeing is very easy indeed. Despite our findings during our straight-line tests, the brakes feel fantastic here —the pedal is so firm and yet progressive. There's no ABS but the system inspires confidence.

Those brakes are matched by steering that seems a little too heavy at first but soon feels entirely natural and full of filtered but highly detailed information. However, while the car provides plenty of tactile information to make up for the lack of aural stimulation, it's a tricky car in which to find a rhythm. Get it right and the Zenos displays a gorgeous balance, fourwheel drifting like a classic but with the bite and response you'd expect of aggressive Avon ZZR tyres. Staying in that zone isn't easy,

'The Caterham requires more of the driver, but it also indulges your every whim'

though. Turn in aggressively and the car snaps instantly into oversteer and it can feel slightly clumsy as it does so, like it's carrying more than the advertised 725kg.

I think this is because the E10 S has a lot more body roll than you'd expect of a track-focused car, so the instant, darting agility is missing. Drive it with the aggression you might a Caterham or Atom and the body control feels too relaxed and hence you end up fighting snap oversteer. It's best to dial back your entry speed and the rate of your initial steering input to ensure the chassis remains unhurried.

Once the turn-in phase is complete the Zenos finds much greater stability and you can start

to bully it a bit more. The lack of a diff really doesn't hurt the car very much at all, and once you're accustomed to the rate of roll and the torque-rich delivery, the E10 S is a huge amount of fun and really satisfying. It doesn't offer the breathless excitement of some pure trackday machines, but it's fast, accessible and rewards smooth technique.

By comparison the Caterham is a fiery ball of energy. The engine is plain more exciting, and the crackling, howling noise and manic gearing add to the sense of excitement. It requires more of the driver, particularly because the gearbox is so much more physical and can be awkward, and the cramped pedal box makes heel-and-toeing trickier, but it responds to those efforts by indulging your every whim. It's more nimble and has faster responses, and although the 420R requires plenty of steering input to provoke and then hold a slide, the more precise throttle response provides all the tools necessary to manipulate the balance with millimetric precision.

But our 420R doesn't feel totally track focused in terms of setup. It runs the less aggressive Avon ZZS tyre and doesn't have that weighty, heavily cambered front-end of the wild 620R we drove here for TCoty in 2013 (evo 189). That means a little more understeer and a lot more oversteer, but arguably even more fun.

The data trace reveals that the Caterham sneaks an advantage over the course of a lap. The difference isn't stark but, bit by bit, the 420R's stronger traction and more confidenceinspiring balance ekes out a lead of eight-tenths of a second. The Zenos actually carries more speed into the first corner (Jochen) but then requires more patience over the high kerbs of the chicane that follows to avoid time-sapping oversteer. Through the long left (Lancaster) onto Blyton's straight the 420R's limited-slip differential allows much greater acceleration. The Zenos almost claws back that time along the straight itself, hitting 120.8mph to the Seven's 121.1mph, and I've more confidence to brake later in the E10 S, too.

However, the latter half of the lap is all 420R. It carries more speed through Bunga-Bunga and the fast esses that follow. It crosses the line in 1:05.8, the E10 S on 1:06.6. It should be noted that Blyton has adopted substantial-looking rectangular markers for the track limits so zero cutting is allowed. These markers would have slowed previous cone-skimming lap times.

ON THE ROAD

Out on the ragged roads near Blyton, the Caterham feels, well, pretty much the same. It's physical to drive as the gearbox requires muscle and the steering weights up through tighter turns, and also simply because you're so close to everything: the heat from the transmission tunnel, every bump and lump that the rear axle clatters over, and the wind whipping around you that carries the engine's intense blare and slams it into your face. The only difference is that you never seem to use the brakes because the 420R can just dive through any corner with no more than a lift or, at worst, a downshift to utilise engine braking. It's noisy and intense but also intoxicating and unforgettable.

The Zenos does feel different on the road. There's more tension, more of an edge to the ride and to the car's responses. It retains the polish shown in that sweet spot on the circuit but adds a new dimension of excitement and physicality. It also feels unbelievably quick now you're more often riding the torque rather than seeking out every last revolution to chase a lap time. In fact it's a whole lot



more convincing in every way and the suspicion that the E10 S is a sports car first and trackday weapon second is confirmed. The steering and brakes are fantastic, you can hear the engine when you haven't got the dulling effects of a snug Arai, and suddenly the experience seems more intense and immersive.

As the miles pass, the E10 S gets ever more impressive, showing superb balance, strong traction and excellent composure even when the going gets really bumpy. Still the spectre of the Caterham's sharpness and excitement remains, but on the road the Zenos does have an appeal all of its own and the light, incredibly stiff structure comes to the fore.



CATERHAM SEVEN 420R ~ ZENOS E10 S ~ 110 100 Port Froid 90 80 SPEED (MPH) 50 METRES

CONCLUSION

It's been a fascinating day, a reminder of the intrinsic rightness that makes the Caterham completely timeless, but also confirmation that there is room for other experiences rich in feedback and excitement but with more modern styling and a bit more comfort.

At first I wondered if the Zenos was caught in a no man's land between trackday machine and road-optimised sports car. At Blyton it displayed moments of magic but also felt heavier than its 725kg and sometimes a bit too prescriptive in terms of its balance. Its more aggressive, agile display on the road added to that feeling... I was impressed with its dynamic polish and the excitement that emerged, but in the UK it is flawed by its lack of weather protection (an optional 'get home' hood is as good as it gets).

However, on both road and track the E10 S gets better the more you drive it and the more you tune into its way of doing things. For me the balance has swung a little too far towards an Elise-type car and needs to be realigned towards on-track sharpness, but there's much to really like here. The next logical step is an E10 R to capture the 420R's excitement on track and an E10 roadster to establish Zenos as an Elise alternative at a more affordable price.

CATERHAM SEVEN 420R

evo rating: ★★★★



Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc **Power** 210bhp @ 7600rpm **Torque** 150lb ft @ 6300rpm Transmission Six-speed manual (option), rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential Front suspension Double wishbones. coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension De Dion semi-independent with A-frame linkage, coil springs, dampers Wheels 6 x 13in front, 8 x 13in rear (option)

Tyres 185/55 R13 front, 215/55 R13 and rear Brakes Ventilated discs front (option), solid discs rear

Weight 560kg

Power-to-weight 381bhp/ton **0-60mph** 3.8sec (claimed) **Top speed** 136mph (claimed) Basic price £33,990

Price as tested £42,145

On sale Now

ZENOS E10 S



Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc, turbo **Power** 250bhp @ 7000rpm **Torque** 295lb ft @ 2500rpm

Transmission Six-speed manual (option), rear-wheel drive

Front suspension Double wishbones. coil springs, inboard pushrod dampers, anti-roll bar **Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil

springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Wheels 16in front, 17in rear

Tyres 195/50 ZR16 front, 225/45 ZR17 rear Brakes Ventilated 300mm front discs (option), solid 278mm rear discs

evo rating: ★★★☆

Weight 725kg

Power-to-weight 350bhp/ton **0-62mph** 4.0sec (claimed) **Top speed** 145mph (claimed) Basic price £29,995 Price as tested £35,635

On sale Now

'AS TESTED' PRICE BREAKDOWN

420 base price (factory built)	£29,995
'R' pack	£3995
13in Apollo wheels	£200
Six-speed gearbox	£1495
Uprated front brakes	£675
Weather equipment and windscreen	£1550
Decal pack	£275
Heater	£300
Shift lights	£300
Lowered floors	£395

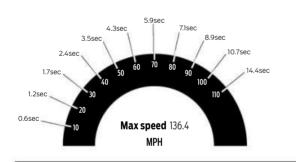
Tonneau cover	£250
Hood bag	£80
Carbon-leather seats	£400
Quick-release steering wheel	£150
Battery cut-off switch	£185
Sport roll-cage	£850
Paint (non-metallic)	£250
OTR costs	£800
Total	£42,145

'AS TESTED' PRICE BREAKDOWN

£24,995
£5000
£1595
£195
£165

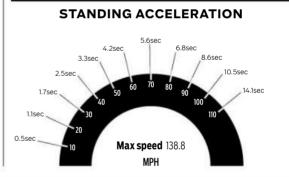
Total	£36,235
OTR costs	£600
Paint	£500
Quick-release steering wheel	£295
Heated removeable windscreen	£1695
Uprated front brakes	£1195

STANDING ACCELERATION



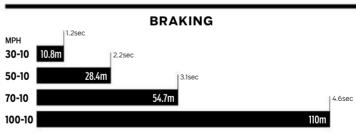
TEST TRACK

Venue Bruntingthorpe. Leicestershire, UK **GPS** 52.493330, -1.121182 Conditions Dry, 15deg C



BRAKING 30-10 25.2m 50-10 2.7sec 46.2m 70-10 4.0sec 100-10 93.4m

IN-GEAR ACCELERATION					
MPH	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
20-40	1.7sec	2.2	2.9		
30-50	1.7	2.2	2.7	3.2	
40-60	1.7	2.1	2.7	3.2	
50-70		2.3	2.9	3.3	
60-80		2.4	2.9	3.5	
70-90			2.9	3.7	
80-100			3.3	3.9	
90-110				4.3	
100-120				5.9	
110-130					
120-140	///////////////////////////////////////				



IN-GEAR ACCELERATION						
MPH	2nd	3rd	4th	5th		
20-40	1.4sec	2.5	4.1			
30-50	1.5	2.0	2.9	4.3		
40-60	1.7	1.9	2.5	3.5		
50-70		2.0	2.5	3.4		
60-80		2.4	2.6	3.4		
70-90	<i>'////////////////////////////////////</i>	2.9	2.9	3.6		
80-100	/////////////////////////////////////		3.5	4.1		
90-110			4.4	4.8		
100-120	/////////////////////////////////////			6.1		
110-130				9.8		
120-140				///////////////////////////////////////		





by COLIN GOODWIN

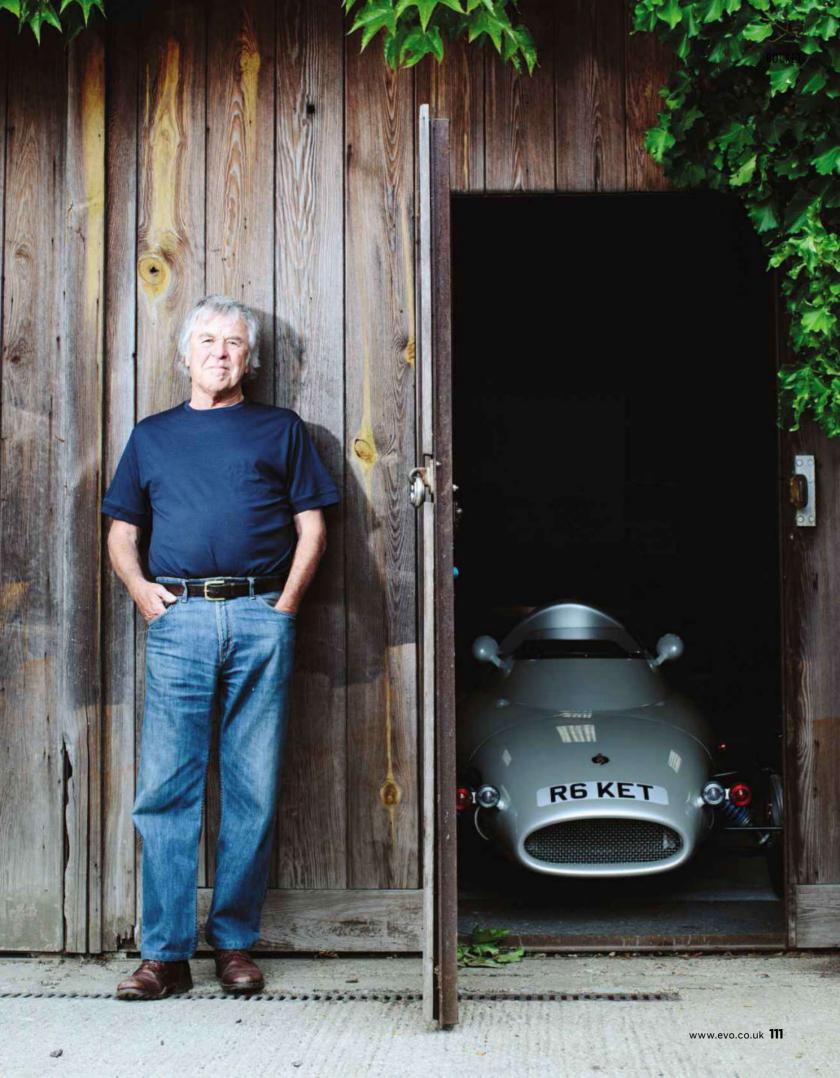
PHOTOGRAPHY by MALCOLM GRIFFITHS



ROCKET

Chris Craft is half of the duo, along with a certain Gordon Murray, who created possibly the greatest bare-essentials drivers' car ever – the Rocket. As it prepares to make a brief return to production, we catch up with Craft and rediscover what made the car so special

MAN





'SHARPEN YOUR PENCIL AND GRAB YOUR

notepad,' said the editor. 'I want you to go down to Goodwood and meet a couple of blokes who are launching some new sports car.' That was the sort of job you got when you were starting out, especially me, because the editor knew that I loved getting my hands dirty and had a fascination for how stuff is made. So on that May day in 1991 I drove down to Sussex. Goodwood was different then; unrestored, almost unused and in some ways even more atmospheric than it is today.

Those two blokes were not just any old blokes. One was Gordon Murray and the other was Chris Craft. I'd not met Murray before but of course I knew that he'd had great success at Brabham and even more at McLaren. The name Chris Craft rang a bell and after a bit of research I learnt enough about his prolific racing career to not come across as ignorant – at least not ignorant of his achievements.

I got there a bit before the event started and had time to have a cuppa with Craft. 'What I'd like is someone to put a modern bike engine in a car,' I said. 'Ah,' replied Craft, 'you might like what you're about to see then.'

It was the Light Car Company Rocket and I did like it. And so did John Cooper, who was there in his NSX (Murray was also in his). It's a day I've never forgotten.

I don't remember if anyone drove the Rocket at Goodwood or even whether it was actually a runner.

The official launch of the car was at the Design Museum in London, but the grown-ups went to that. Gavin Green, who was the aforementioned editor at *Car*, did the world's first road test of the Rocket across the Durham Dales. My first experience of it was at Silverstone during a trackday. Craft was there and offered me a go in the back. You need a bit of confidence in your pilot when you're a passenger in a Rocket as it's a bit intimate to say the least and a crash could almost result in unplanned coitus. Your legs go either side of the driver's backside and you hold on to grips that are welded onto the chassis' side rails. Craft's driving skill absolutely stunned me and so did the car. We ate an F40 and gobbled up other tackle that we should only ever have seen the back of.

Then, a while later, I got to drive the Rocket on the road, where it really belongs. Driving a Rocket is such a different experience. It was then and it is today, despite the fact that today we are more used to extreme, barely road-legal machines and even bike-engined cars. But let's leave the past and come forward to the present.

It's hard to believe that next year it will be 25 years since the Rocket was launched. A lot has happened in a quarter of a century. Trackdays have become incredibly popular, more so than they were in 1992, which sadly made the Rocket a car ahead of its time. Over those years I've become friends with both Murray and Craft. With Gordon

'We ate an F40 and gobbled up other tackle that we should only have seen the back of...'

Left: Craft (on the right) talks our man Goodwin around Rocket no. 26. Right: adjustable dampers are from Bilstein: earlier Rockets ran Showa units. Below: a true space frame construction







through taking part every year in his soapbox race at his gaff in the Dordogne and with Chris because, well, because he's just terrific company. I know of few people who have led a fuller life.

We're at the Crafts' house in Chigwell, Essex, where Chris's wife Jill is knocking us up lunch. She tried to divorce Chris after their first week of marriage because they honeymooned at the Nürburgring 1000km in 1971 'and all he talked about for the whole week was tyres'. Either Mrs Craft managed to filter out the words 'Dunlop' and 'Firestone' or found deeper sides to her husband.

Their son Luke is in Mallorca working on someone's superyacht, which is a good thing because I'm about to have a go in his Rocket. They're a great team, Chris and Luke (son Jake is a drummer), having worked on many projects together. The current one is putting together three new Rockets that will bring the total made up to 50. 'We never made number 13 and didn't get around to numbers 5 or 7 because two of our mates were fighting about who would have first shout and in the end neither of them coughed up a deposit for one,' says Chris.

Luke is a perfectionist and it shows in R6 KET, the Lamborghini Balon White chassis – number R026 – that was the last Rocket to be made. Its Yamaha FZR1000 engine has been tweaked to develop 171bhp at 10,500rpm and has titanium valves. The car's weight? Just 390kg.

It's a while since I last drove a Rocket. Possibly since I used one to unofficially break the world reverse speed record, at 104.1mph. It all comes back, though. Luke's car has a digital dash as opposed to the round analogue instruments from the Yamaha bike, but the rest is very familiar. The Moto-Lita steering wheel with lovely Rocket logo is the work of another of Gordon and Chris's mates, a genius graphics man called Rick Ward. (That was another remarkable thing about the Rocket project: virtually all involved were mates or had worked with Murray or Craft.)

The engine fires instantly. The throttle is light, as are all the controls, except the unassisted Brembo Formula 3 brakes. Next to your right knee are the two controls that you need for the gears. The top one selects high and low ratio, plus reverse, in the Weismann transaxle and the other selects ratios in the standard Yamaha five-speed gearbox (with neutral between first and second).

If you've driven a Rocket, you'll know what's coming. Matching the bloody clutch to engine revs. The former is ridiculously light and the latter hard to modulate. By a feat of concentration and plenty of revs, I pull away first time without stalling. Very light, very accurate and very quick



Below: Craft recommends driving the Rocket in the lower of the transaxle's two ratios; Murray, however, is believed to keep his car in the higher setting. Bottom: Rick Ward's fabulous design for the Rocket's colourful crest

'I still think the problem was that the Rocket was ahead of it's time'







steering. Beautifully compliant ride. Vibration through solid engine mounts. I remember the car in detail now. Gordon Murray has the same philosophy of light weight and supple ride today as he had when he burnt a candle at both ends trying to finish the Rocket's design before embarking upon his next masterpiece, the McLaren F1. As Chris Craft has said: 'The F1 gives you most of Gordon's singular vision, the Rocket gives you all of it.'

There are great roads around Chigwell. Many are narrow but that's not a problem in one of the easiest-to-place road cars ever made. I'm really impressed by how skilled I am at playing the clutch and then I stall it turning around for a cornering shot. No problem, but unfortunately the battery, which lives next to the exhaust headers, has got a bit hot and bothered. We get it going again but now that I know that I mustn't stall the Rocket, I can't stop doing so.

Narrowness in a car has never been so important, but even more so is the sensation that you are travelling faster than you actually are. Craft sends me off down a long and reasonably quiet road. You can happily drive the Rocket in the lower of the transaxle's two ratios, which is what Craft recommends. It's loud but thrilling to give the four-stroke motor a large bootful and send the rev counter up towards five figures. Suddenly remembering that we are in 2015, I glance worriedly at the speedo. The numbers are big enough for a decent holiday on the bus, but not for a season of porridge. It felt like at least 120mph.

I feel attached to the Rocket in a way that I don't with even the best Porsches. I think it's because I know the cast who built it, and perhaps because I was there at the beginning. It was built by a group of friends whose friends bought quite a few of them. Murray's mate George Harrison bought one, Mark Knopfler has one, Guy Fletcher, who played keyboards on Dire Straits' album *Brothers in Arms*, owned one and Jay Leno still has one.

At £38,000 it was hideously expensive in 1992, largely because it had so many bespoke components. The Weismann transaxle alone was a fortune. But I still think the real problem was that the Rocket was ahead of its time. Most people would now find it too slow as a trackday car compared to Radicals and the more powerful Atoms and Caterhams. No, the problem was that there wasn't the acceptance of impractical and highly focused sports cars.

I'd have one like a shot if they were affordable. A large percentage of Rockets live in Japan, owned by anonymous collectors. Others are spread around the UK and a few are in Europe. They don't often come up second-hand and when they do they're way out of my budget. Looking at the two bare chassis in the Crafts' barn/workshop, the beautiful detailing of the brazed yet unpainted tubes sets the imagination running out of key with the wallet. 'Space frame' is often a misused term but the Rocket's chassis truly is a proper space frame construction. Apart from one tube, every run of tubing is either in compression or tension, not bending. Purist, perfectly engineered by a perfectionist.

I've returned Luke's car to base without damage. I guess I've now driven Murray, Craft and their team's masterpiece on average once every five years. Since I've behaved, perhaps Luke will give me another go in 2019. Three lucky enthusiasts with deep pockets and a love of pure sports cars with amazing parentage will soon be able to buy their own new Rocket and become members of a small club.



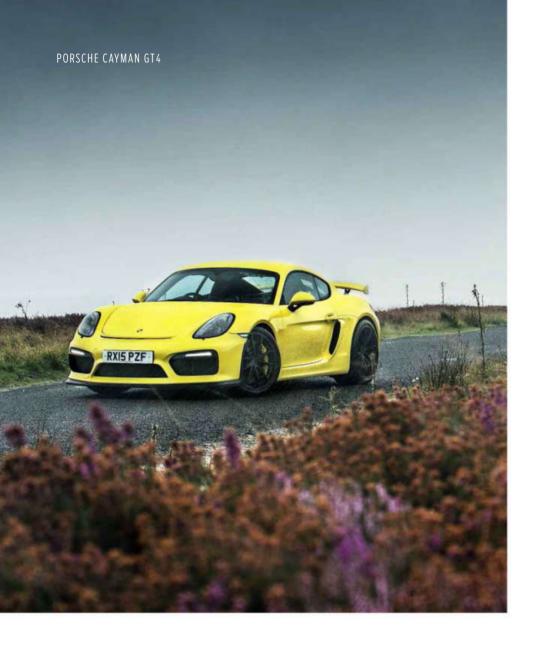
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HE GT4 HAS BEEN gone a couple of days now, but I can still feel it. Not in some wistful, tragically yearning sort of way. My heart isn't aching but the ball of my left foot really is, my back's still fizzing a bit too, and my left shoulder is tight from the short, heavy gearshift. It's a familiar feeling: the 997 GT3 didn't just leave an indelible impression on heart and mind, the sheer physicality of the driving experience lingered on for a good few days after that grumpy, gritty, glorious flat-six had fallen silent and you'd scrambled out of its tight-fitting Recaros. The 991 GT3 - brilliant though it is - doesn't deliver the same workout. But the Porsche Motorsport department's new baby? It leaves wounds.

You know all about the Cayman GT4 already. You know it has the 3.8-litre flat-six from the soon to be defunct Carrera S, producing 380bhp at 7400rpm and 310lb ft between 4750 and 6000rpm. You know the front suspension is

almost pure GT3, with inverted dampers and split wishbones to allow for precise camber adjustment. You know about the six-piston brake calipers with huge discs. You know the rear axle is virtually allnew - stiffer and stronger and featuring helper springs. You know the bodywork has much more aggressive (and also adjustable) aero, that the anti-roll bars are three-way adjustable and that this particular model comes only with a six-speed manual gearbox. You probably know that when we drove it at the Portimão Circuit in Portugal (evo 208) it didn't disappoint. In fact, so good a job had the Motorsport team done with the chassis that the 3.8-litre engine felt like the weak link. I bet Porsche's engineers loved that after the lengths they've gone to just to make it fit. 'Nice job, boys. Now it just needs a GT3 engine...'

Well, that was then. In sunny climes, with a smooth circuit and with a very limited amount of time in those optional carbonfibre seats lifted straight out of the 918 Spyder. The here and now is rain. Pouring rain. And fog. And standing water. And a patchwork surface that's evolved into something akin to an assault course for



'Today is about feeding on the information the GT4 can stream back to the driver' wheels and tyres to bump, thump and skip over. Ah, the North York Moors on a summer's day. Poor photographer Aston Parrott wants to cry, but for me the rain isn't such a bad thing. Today won't be so much about extracting the maximum from the GT4 as feeding on the information it can stream back to the driver, about the confidence it breeds (or doesn't) and about how special it feels well below its maximum-attack capabilities.

This is absolutely critical because the GT4 has been marketed as a back-to-basics machine, a car built with the recognition that life isn't all about lap times and launch control. The six-speed 'box is the most tangible symbol of that philosophy but today we'll see if the commitment to involvement and tactility runs deeper. We'll learn if the GT4 rewards and excites at speeds you can safely achieve on the road. I'm thinking of those old GT3s, 996 and 997 vintage, that had a similar footprint to the Cayman and managed to feel deeply special from all of about 2mph.

It's a short sprint from the hotel lobby to the car park where the GT4 lies in wait. I attack it with a shameful lack of commitment, one of those

awkward, slightly embarrassed canters that men break into when they don't want to get wet but hope to maintain a certain masculine, devil-maycare attitude. It's made all the more ridiculous because the GT4 is such an arresting sight that it breaks my rhythm, and as I involuntarily shed speed to take in the evil black wheels pushed right out to the limits the bodywork, the optional 410mm ceramic brakes so visible behind slender spokes, that proud wing rising up on intricate stanchions and the sheer rippling aggression of the thing, the gravel surface nearly sends me end over end. I drove the GT4 up here from Northamptonshire last night and had plenty of time to grow accustomed to its shape and stance when stopping for fuel and fried chicken, but it so perfectly expresses four-wheeled aggression that it seems to punch me square in the jaw every time I clap eyes on it. Any suggestion that the most hardcore Cayman is something of a GT3-lite just doesn't bear scrutiny. There's nothing 'junior' about the GT4, nothing at all.

The steely sense of purpose continues inside, especially when you wake the 3.8-litre flat-six.

The noise is deep and dirty but that's easily achieved with a bit of exhaust trickery. There's something beneath the crackle and howl, though – the grind, rattle and zizz of metal rotating, pushing and pulling – and you feel every vibration through the base of the carbon-shelled seat. The engine is so close, palpably closer than in a 911, and the overall effect is that the GT4 feels almost shockingly extreme. It has dynamic mounts for the transmission and they should be relaxed at a standstill, but every tremor screams tension... control. The fabric door-pulls subconsciously confirm your initial impression that this car is channelling RS. The GT4 feels so much more focused than I was expecting.

Pickering is bustling as usual, hardy tourists unbowed by the filthy conditions and setting out

Pickering is bustling as usual, hardy tourists unbowed by the filthy conditions and setting out for the day wrapped up in waterproofs, clutching walking poles and with the maniacal grin of people who enjoy walking in driving rain and howling wind. The GT4 seems grumpier than these happy fools. As we've come to expect from modern GT-badged Porsches, the ride quality is actually pretty good. It's firm, of course, but even crawling along in traffic with the dampers set to Normal (Sport is really only for racetracks) the edges of the sharpest bumps are smoothly rounded off. However, what's new here is that you can hear the suspension working: a clonk here, a clatter there. It sounds like there's no sound deadening at all and not much in the way of rubber in the suspension. either.

sound deadening at all and not much in the way of rubber in the suspension, either.

Then there's the clutch. Blimey, it's heavy. We're not talking Countach-style discomfort, but it requires a real shove and the shorter gearlever has introduced a sinewy quality to the shift action that is at times satisfying but can make upshifts across the gate tricky to negotiate. These are the formative moments, while the oil and water temperatures are sitting stubbornly in the blue,

'It never lets you forget that it lives not for your convenience but to provide a challenge'



and the GT4 feels tough and noisy. Oh, you can drive a GT4 slowly, you could even drive it every day, but it never lets you forget that it lives not for your convenience but to provide a challenge. I like that. The Moors can't come soon enough.

Pickering is wide, well sighted and fast. Or at least it would be if it wasn't for the coaches and caravans. Even so, the GT4 starts to relax a little as the speeds rise, picking off in complete safety gaggles of dawdlers without so much as a downshift. The gearing has been the source of some controversy and maybe it'll hurt the GT4's appeal later, but right now that big-cube engine pulls each ratio with a ferocious energy. The ride, too, has a wonderful feeling of tight-tolerance composure. It might be an exaggeration to say it breathes with the surface, but it certainly never knocks the wind from your lungs. Still noisy

though. It's like the drivetrain is solidly mounted and the engine's every beat comes drumming through the seat.

If the sheer pervasiveness of the feedback is a shock, the quality and clarity of information bubbling away beneath the white noise is expected but nevertheless very welcome. The ceramic brakes make a distinctive brushing noise whenever you ask for them, but the pedal travel is minimal, the bite immediate and there's so much feel I'm not sure you'd ever trigger the ABS even on a sodden day in Yorkshire.

on a sodden day in Yorkshire.

The steering doesn't have the same unequivocal intimacy but it's a huge leap on from the Cayman GTS's rack, which has an unnervingly smooth texture in the wet and provides little clue as to whether the contact patches are biting through to the surface or gliding over the water. The GT4 is different. The weight ebbs and flows as you load up the tyres, the small Alcantara steering wheel



lightly crackles and hums as the front tyres roll over the craggy topography, and all the time you feel absolutely confident about every move the car makes. The sense of locked-down agility is very familiar if you've ever tried a 991 GT3.

Right towards Hutton-le-Hole and then up onto Blakey Ridge, the GT4 barrels into the gloom. My peripheral vision picks out rich, purple heather, but for the most part the moorland is hidden. There's no time to miss the view or rue our luck, though, because the road is flooded with a million tributaries flowing into frequent great lakes of standing water. In those amazing old GT3s on barely-treaded Cup tyres you'd splash carefully on days like these, wary of the light front end floating into understeer or getting unsettled on the brakes and squirming off-line. The GT4, with the new and remarkable Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres, still shows flashes of sharp teeth, but for the most part it simply cuts through the water and howls across the moor.

There's little scope to really extend the 3.8-litre flat-six at this point, but if it felt disappointing at Portimão – the wide, reference-light nature of a racetrack always steals away performance and can even dull the character of an engine – I can categorically say that's not the case here. It's sharp and feels so hungry when you jump on the throttle in the mid-range, and the dry, coarse tone has something of the revered Mezger about it. I won't pretend it's *that* special, *that* ferocious, but it's a hell of an engine. You have to remind yourself that this car costs not £100,000 but £64,451 – although more like £75,000 for a good spec. I can't think of a car for similar money with an engine that feels and sounds so special.

And the gearbox! So the clutch is a bit heavy, but up here and away from traffic that doesn't matter one bit, and the weighty, short shift is so precise and rewarding. The rev-match function in Sport is brilliant in uncertain conditions when a dragging rear axle could be nasty, yet should you forget it's there and heel in your own blip of throttle, it seems to allow you to take control seamlessly.

Much was made of the GT4's adjustable antiroll bars at launch and we heard that everyone's favourite brand ambassador, Walter Röhrl, likes the front set to soft and the rear to hard, giving a pointy, oversteery balance. This press car is slightly more conservative, with both bars in the middle setting, and I'm grateful that the front end feels beautifully responsive but never nervous. In fact, the sheer mechanical grip is superb and the way the GT4 changes direction so cleanly and carries its weight so effortlessly is deeply impressive. Push really, really hard and there is some understeer on turn-in. Pour in the flat-six early and hard and that vanishes quickly and the tail shudders into a spike of oversteer. These are tiny little moments but they have a familiar, sharp



edge from GT3s old and new. If you hurry yourself and the car, it can feel like the GT4 is just waiting for an opportunity to bite and do things you can't quite keep on top of.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth, but the combination of such effective roll stiffness and those big, grippy tyres means that the limit of lateral grip comes and goes quickly. Fortunately the car's inherent balance means these moments are thrilling rather than terrifying. Plunging between puddles, traction control snipping at the soaring power delivery, the chassis edging in and out of little slip angles, the GT4 has just the right balance of precision, control, sharpness and mild peril to deliver raw, addictive excitement.

If you find the resolve to disable the traction and stability control completely then you can actually feel the GT4's supreme balance and agility at lower speeds. Turn in with a little more aggression, snap the throttle open early and overdrive the car and it comes alive not in short, sharp spikes of slip but with bigger angles held easily. Now you've got the car under your control nice and early in the corner, manipulating its balance instead of reacting to tyres at the very limit of their lateral grip. It looks more dramatic but it feels

Above: GT4 gets
20mm ride-height drop
compared to the Cayman
GTS. Above right:
sublime mid-engine
balance is easily exploited
on wet tarmac with the
stability control disabled.
Right: six-speed manual
is one of the best in
the business







'Over-drive the car and it comes alive, with bigger angles held easily'



calmer from the driver's seat. Of course, the GT4 is not one for long, languid slides, and a limited-slip diff sees it build speed almost frantically even as you're sliding, but the chassis feels so consistent and controlled that the whole process is intuitive. Today wasn't meant to be about finding the very limit, but the GT4 is persuasive...

So the GT4 is intense and deeply involving, thanks in part to that manual gearbox but also because it's just alive with noise and sensation. It's also infected with an energy and enthusiasm, a sharp-edged fury that's written in its superb throttle response and the way it lunges from 5000rpm to 7800rpm with ravenous hunger. It finally feels like the real deal – a Cayman built to be the best it can be. It doesn't have the purity of steering feedback of the old Cayman R, but it's so much more aggressive, so much faster and more exciting in every other respect. You simply don't think about the Cayman GTS or the R when you drive the GT4. It's from a league above, closer in feel and philosophy to the GT3.

In some ways the 991 GT3 is more exciting still. In raw performance it murders the GT4 and its searing engine is all encompassing, almost terrifyingly so. It's also easier to drive on the road because its traction is almost impossible to defeat, whereas the GT4 will occasionally spin up its rear tyres as you get right into the heat of the delivery, at around 6500rpm. However, that incredible security does mean you have to drive with real commitment to make the GT3 come alive. Robbed of the interaction of a great manual 'box, it can feel too easy at times, or simply too illegal when you do finally feel like you're giving the car a workout.

Does the GT4 hark back to great champions of the past, then? Has it rediscovered the sweet spot of the enthralling 997 GT3? The weather never quite lifts sufficiently to answer that question definitively, but I am enthralled completely by the GT4. Its focus is absolute, its performance is thrilling and has just the right amount of rabidity to call to mind the GT3 or even cars as frenetic and relentless as the Ferrari 458 Speciale. And yet it also feels physical and old-school at lower speeds... Almost the best of both worlds. It's a special car. In the rain, in the fog, trickling through the small town of Pickering or rushing headlong over the moors. It could do with shorter gearing. It doesn't steer with the same wonderful tactility of a 997 GT3. That's it. No wonder getting hold of a GT4 is so damn tricky. ×

PORSCHE CAYMAN GT4

Engine Flat-six, 3800cc
Power 380bhp @ 7400rpm
Torque 310lb ft @ 4750-6000rpm
Transmission Six-speed manual, rearwheel drive, LSD, PSM, PTV
Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs (option),
410mm front, 390mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels 8.5 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear
Tyres 245/35 ZR20 front, 395/30 ZR20 rear
Weight 1340kg
Power-to-weight 288bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.4sec (claimed)
Top speed 183mph (claimed)

evo rating: ★★★★★

Basic price £64,451



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SESSION 1 Arrive and sign on One hour of practice lapping 8.00 Briefing Timed lapping begins 8.30

9.00 Session ends 10.00 11.00

SESSION 2

Arrive and sign on

One hour of practice lapping 10.00 Briefing

Timed lapping begins 10.30 11.00

Session ends 12.00

13.00

SESSION 3 Arrive and sign on

12.00 Briefing

One hour of practice lapping 12.30

Timed lapping begins 13.00

Session ends

14.00 15.00

SESSION 4 Arrive and sign on

14.00

One hour of practice lapping Briefing 14.30

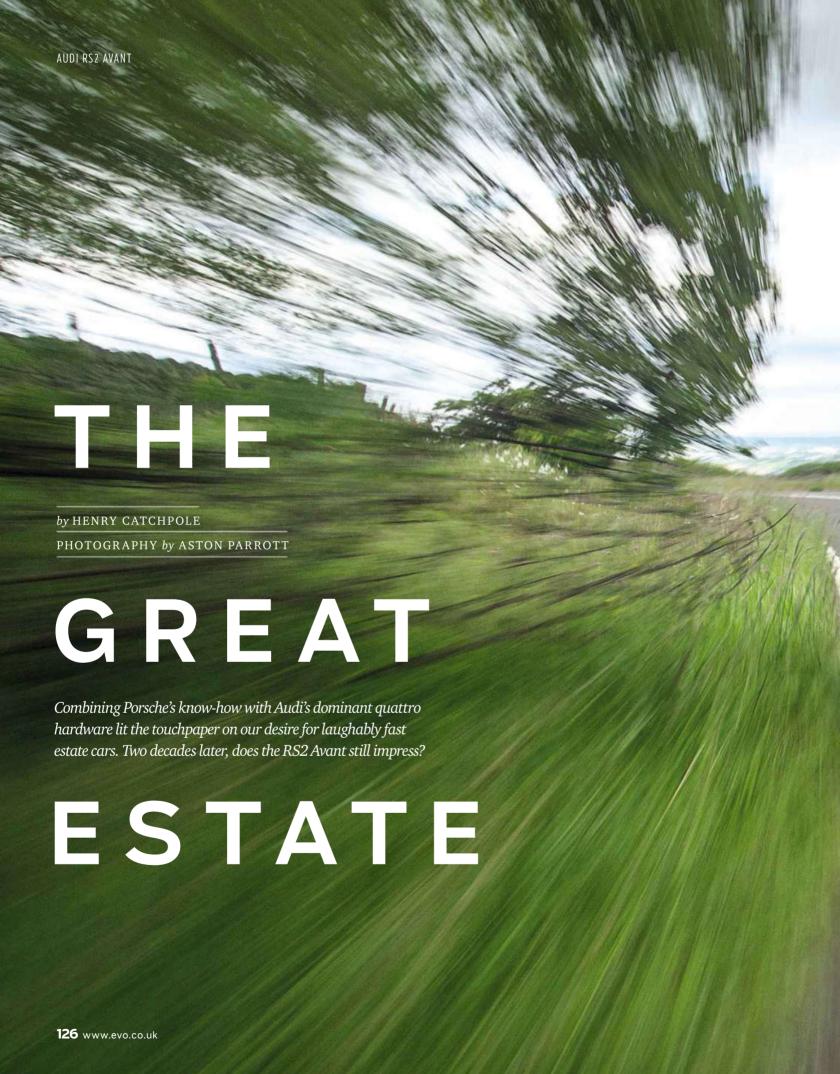
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Today, if you said the sixteenth

letter of the alphabet followed by the first positive integer to a roomful of car enthusiasts, I suspect most would instantly think of McLaren's hypercar. And with good reason. Some, however, would undoubtedly think of the Prodrive-tuned GC8 Subaru Impreza. A few might even connect it with the supercar club that Damon Hill helped set up a while ago. But long before all of these there was the Audi RS2, and I think it can reasonably lay claim to having first dibs on the now well-known nomenclature. Why? Because while it was being developed in the early '90s, the RS2 was known internally at Audi as 'P1'.

The 'P', of course, stood for 'Porsche'. Ferdinand Piëch, then head of Audi's supervisory board, realised that his Ingolstadt engineers were far too busy developing the important new A4, A6 and A8 models to be distracted by a niche project like the RS2, but nonetheless he wanted his idea for a really fast estate car to come to fruition. Turning to Porsche, where Piëch had worked during the '60s and early '70s, was the obvious solution. Call it payback for Audi building the 924 and 944 for Porsche.

Looking around the car as it's carefully rolled out from its trailer today, I'm staggered once more by just how many bits are obviously from the Zuffenhausen toy cupboard. Sitting in the car park on a slightly overcast Peak District morning, the first things that catch my eyes are

the wing mirrors. Slightly too small for the car, their 911 shape acts like a catalyst, opening your eyes to all sorts of other Porsche parts. The front bumper, with its indicators and sidelights, is suddenly an obvious refugee, as are the five-spoke 17-inch Carrera Cup wheels, which have such a distinctive Porsche design. Look closer still and you see that the brake calipers actually spell it out for you with the seven white letters on a red background. The name is also there, in even smaller letters, on the badges on the front grille and the tailgate. Interestingly, this first Audi RS badge also separates the 'R' from the 'S2', denoting that this is very much the Renn version of Audi's pre-existing S2 model.

The lowlier model had 230bhp and 258lb ft, and although the same basic 20-valve in-line five-cylinder engine remains, Porsche badges greet you once more when you lift up the bonnet on the RS2. Hotter camshafts and a 30 per cent bigger KKK turbocharger puffing at 1.4bar (up from 1.1) were perhaps the biggest changes, although a new Bosch engine management system, new injectors, a more freely flowing exhaust manifold and a bigger intercooler all played their part too. The end result of all this fettling was that Michael Hölscher, who oversaw the project and would go on to work on the Carrera GT, exceeded the target set for him of a 30 per cent increase in power, the final figures reading 315bhp at 6500rpm and 302lb ft at 3000rpm.









Far left: turbocharged 2.2-litre five-cylinder engine produces 315bhp – a big figure back in 1994. Left: six-speed manual has to be worked to keep the RS2 on boost

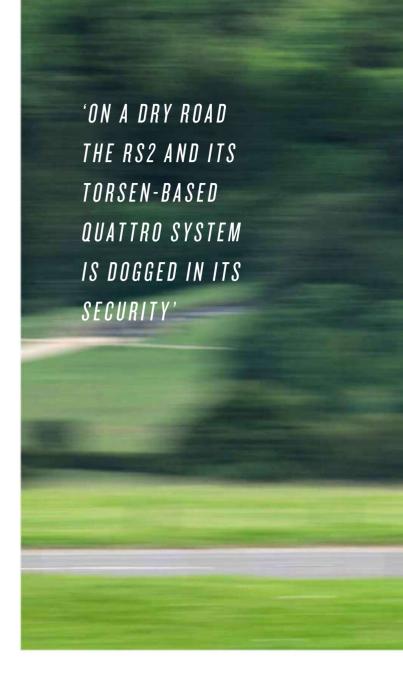
The now famous Nogaro Blue paint is distinctive but not lairy... unlike the blue Alcantara inside. Open the door and you are exposed to what can only be described as a very arresting interior. The options were full black Nappa leather with wood veneer, silver Alcantara with carbonfibre, or this. Initially it's overwhelming in its vibrancy, but look closer and there are some lovely details, such as the very subtle blue strands that run through the weave of the glossy carbonfibre.

Perhaps one reason for the humdinging colour is the number on the odometer. With just 1204 miles on the clock, this has to be one of, if not *the*, most well-preserved RS2 in existence. Owned by Audi UK, it certainly must be the most immaculate right-hand-drive example, as just 180 units of 2900 came with the wheel on this side. Incidentally, Audi originally intended to produce only 2200 RS2s, but such was the car's popularity that it eventually increased that number by 700.

Get in and you find that the Recaro, with its very period rectangular headrest, is set a little high but clasps you reassuringly about the ribcage. Twist the key and the RS2 comes to life with a dry, high-pitched clearing of its throat before settling to a bassy but relatively demure idle. The wheel is quite an attractive airbag item but some of the early cars came with an even simpler looking Procon-Ten three-spoker (Procon-Ten was a cable-operated system that, in the event of a crash, pulled the steering wheel towards the dash while simultaneously tightening the seatbelts).

With plenty of room in the RS2 there's no need to banish photographer Aston Parrott to a separate car, so he piles his camera equipment into the boot and we head off onto the Derbyshire roads. We're heading for the highways and byways around Chatsworth because I rather like the idea of one great rallying estate hosting another. The RS2's cabin feels wonderfully light and airy as we reach the nearby moorland. All-round visibility would hardly be better if we were in the top of a lighthouse. As we pass the majestic west façade of Chatsworth House, viewed across impeccable rolling parkland that is kept trim by a herd of wandering sheep, I'm sorely tempted to just fulfil all my Quattro-based RAC Rally fantasies and dive off onto the grass to create a special stage between the trees, just as they did in the '80s.

I'm conscious, however, that despite it being 20 years since the RS2 came to the UK, this car is barely run in. As a result I take it quietly for the first few miles, warming fluids through thoroughly, stretching things gradually and gently, like a runner going for a tentative first jog a few







Above: the 17-inch wheels, front indicators and curvy wing mirrors were all Porsche parts. **Left:** fast and practical – the idea behind the RS2 was hugely appealing 20 years ago and it's one that Audi still runs with today



days after a marathon. The gearshift is certainly happy not to be rushed. The lever springs easily out of gear, giving it an initially very light action, but then you need to pause very slightly before pushing very deliberately through some resistance in order to slot it into the next ratio.

The ride is interesting. A firmness over smaller bumps is immediately apparent and quite surprising for a car of this vintage. However, just as you're getting accustomed to this and thinking it's all going to be tightly controlled, a bend in the road pops up and reveals a goodly amount of body roll. The steering is relatively weighty, although it does lighten up a bit when you push on. Sadly, feel is noticeable only by its absence.

We find a set of tightish corners and I go back and forth enthusiastically a few times while Aston wields his Nikon. The RS2's grip really does feel unimpeachable even under fairly severe provocation with the throttle. It's not a total understeer-fest as Audi-haters might have you believe, but equally it doesn't feel like you'd ever get the car into that perfect window of mild-oversteer balance that the best four-wheel-drive performance cars excel at. Things might be different if the surface was wet or if you could throw a lot more speed at it on a circuit, but on a dry road the RS2 and its Torsen-based quattro system is dogged in its security. This actually becomes hugely impressive through faster corners, the whole car leaning more than expected but also displaying a tenacity that is

bewildering given the tyres it's on. Did I not mention the tyres? They're Dunlop SP Sport 8000s in a 245/40 R17 fitment. Perhaps I should have added the word 'original' to that last sentence. Yes, these are the tyres that the car was delivered on. Understandable really - it would have been a pretty good effort to wear through them in 1200 miles...

On the transmission tunnel is something that looks like it might enliven proceedings. On a graph-paper grid is drawn what even I can recognise as a pair of connected axles, with the word 'Diff' on the button below. Press it and you engage an electronic diff lock on the rear axle. However, before you get too excited, you are only meant to engage it at a standstill when you have found yourself in particularly slimy, sludgy, sandy or snowy conditions and might otherwise struggle to get moving. Trundle along above 15mph and the lock will automatically disengage.

There really isn't much going on low down in the 2.2-litre engine's rev range. It's perfectly smooth and tractable; you just don't go anywhere very quickly. The party starts to get going when someone brings the fruit punch out at 3000rpm. It's still not in full swing, but things are hotting up by 3500rpm when the emergency vodka stash is discovered. By 4000rpm everything is in total carpet-replacement territory. In other words, the RS2 has a very old-school turbocharged power delivery, and that certainly makes it exciting.



Above: reflector strip joining the rear lights apes that of the 993 911. Right: badge clearly marks this car out as a 'Renn' (racing) version of the S2 and highlights the Audi-Porsche partnership



You may recall the *Autocar & Motor* coverline that proclaimed 'Quicker than a McLaren' above a picture of a blue RS2 oversteering slightly (they had to resort to gravel to induce some attitude). A delve into the story revealed that the headline wasn't exactly misleading, but Woking certainly wouldn't have lost any sleep over the figures either. The RS2 recorded a 0-30mph time of 1.5sec compared to the F1's 1.7, but that was the only winning increment. Still, mighty impressive. As was the 0-60mph time of 4.8sec, which made the RS2 faster than every contemporary Porsche bar the Turbo. Interestingly, the official time of 5.4sec was conveniently slower than every contemporary Porsche...

The idea of winding this particular RS2 up to about 4500rpm (I'm guessing, but you get a feel for these things) and sidestepping the clutch to get a 0-60mph time is not appealing. Nonetheless, the in-gear performance is easily extracted and feels wonderfully strong. Third and fourth gears are where the engine seems to do its best work too, the forced-induction surge lasting long enough to impress and be enjoyed.

Interestingly, it's not until relatively high in the rev range that warbling vestiges of Audi's distinctive five-cylinder soundtrack really come alive.

The hugely long travel of the throttle pedal takes some getting used to. Most modern cars seem to require only the first third of the available travel to extract all their performance, but even by 1995 standards the RS2 requires a remarkably full extension of the right leg to wring the last from the engine. When you do reach the carpet, however, you feel very committed to the formidable acceleration you've summoned up.

As we pass the fluoro-and-blue decals of a police car heading in the opposite direction, I'm reminded that the RS2 was apparently a favourite of the criminal underworld. Nick Mason's car was pinched and used in an armed robbery, for example. It makes perfect sense really – lots of room for swag and more than enough poke to have a good go at outrunning the cops. Undesirables also purloined Dario Franchitti's RS2, but his was put to use in a ram-raid on a jeweller's. I like to think that they had actually only intended to use it as a getaway car, but got caught napping when it came on boost and piled into the shop by mistake.

When I hand the RS2 back at the end of the day (thankfully without having, inadvertently or otherwise, rammed any buildings) I feel hugely privileged to have added a not insignificant percentage to this car's total mileage. But as it is loaded back onto its transporter to head home I'm juggling slightly mixed feelings about the car. The RS2 is very desirable and very cool, but there are no two ways about it: it's just not quite as satisfying to drive as that P1 moniker and the Porsche badges would lead you to hope. Every one of the RS2's progeny, as we must surely view all RS4s, is better to drive. And yet I still love this very first RS. It oozes exclusivity and instils a lust in people that very few cars, and even fewer estates, ever have. For that reason it will always remain a legend.



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From 650S to Integrale, evo's Fast Fleet is the biggest and most comprehensive long-term section in the business

THIS MONTH

VAUXHALL CORSA VXR // FORD FIESTA ST // LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE // CATERHAM SEVEN 420R // KIA PROCEED GT // // VW GOLF GTI Mk2 // MAZDA MX-5 Mk1 // FORD FOCUS RS

Vauxhall Corsa VXR

NEW ARRIVAL

Vauxhall's latest pocket rocket joins the Fast Fleet – with some big shoes to fill

THE DISAPPOINTMENT interesting notion at **evo** Towers.
Simply: so good has the compact hot hatch become that it can often be more exciting than an affordable rear-wheel-drive sports car.

The spec of our new Corsa VXR alludes to this: 202bhp at 5800rpm from a 1.6-litre four-cylinder turbo petrol engine, a limited-slip diff, Brembo brakes and Recaro bucket

the VXR in excellent stead when it

The competition in the Corsa's The competition in the Corsa's class is fierce, though, not least from Ford's Fiesta ST. Our Fast Fleet ST proved thoroughly entertaining during its time with us (see p138), so it'll be interesting to see how the Vauxhall compares long-term. It's also not that long ago that road test

having come from a short stint on Lime Green option. The latter isn't for everyone, though, and would likely have made me feel even more awkward about driving a car with a registration plate so dangerously close to 'Love Vauxhall'.







'Jaunts on some favourite tarmac have revealed the limited-slip diff to be a real highlight'





Above: B7 RS4-like Recaro buckets are standard kit. **Top:** Super Sport tyres part of the Performance Pack

equivalent to the extra kit on our old VXR Clubsport. First impressions are that the cost is worth it, although we'll need to spend more time assessing the harder ride the pack brings to be certain. This car also has the £150 Carbon Pack, which adds faux carbonfibre trim on the wing mirrors and front grille. We wouldn't bother.

Although it's still early days, L5 VXL has already come into its own on my lengthy commute from north London to the **evo** office in Northamptionshire. DAB radio as standard as well as a nifty system for connecting your iPhone to the car means entertainment is well catered for. It's also handy having something so small and nimble when driving in the city.

As for the hot hatch staple of proper B-roads, a few brief jaunts along some favourite tarmac have revealed the diff to be a highlight. The VXR also appears to have that infectious and addictive scruff-of-the-neck attitude that makes a small but powerful hot hatch such an engaging thing to drive. I'm already hooked and have some fairly ambitious plans for adventures in the Corsa over the coming months.

I'll also be writing about the VXR on evo.co.uk, so make sure you check online for regular updates. ■

Hunter Skipworth (@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired	July 2015
Total mileage	4927
Mileage this month	833
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.0



LET'S PRETEND FOR A minute that I've lost my job – kicked out of the world of motoring journalism after a murky fracas with far reaching implications involving the boss of VW, a magnesium wheel and a Ginsters pasty. Apart from causing the **evo** mailbag to bulge like a bag tank with CVs and covering letters, my departure means that I will have to buy some wheels (not the magnesium kind for obvious reasons) to get around in.

Let's assume that this purchase has to be new and reasonably priced. I don't have any dogs or children, but I do like to carry a bicycle or two around the country with me and occasionally even some rally car gubbins, so I need a little bit of practicality. My new job as a rep for a wellington boot manufacturer means that I need to cover plenty of miles, frequently down twisting lanes to the remoter

areas where you can often buy such mud-plugging footwear. I'm not merely munching motorway miles.

On the face of it there is a plethora of cars that could fulfil my need: 208 GTi, GT86, Golf, perhaps even a warm BMW or Audi if funds would permit. But after a year in EJ14 URN, the car I'd go for, the one I'd spend my own money on, would undoubtedly be a Fiesta ST.

URNie, as those in the office who like to give cars names inevitably christened the Fiesta, was an ST-3. This meant a list price of £19,545 and a standard equipment list longer than most Ashes tests. There was Bluetooth, DAB radio, satnav, heated seats, a heated windscreen, climate control, partleather Recaros, cruise control, auto headlights, auto wipers, auto dimming rear-view mirror, powerfold door mirrors, keyless entry and a USB connection. To be honest I could have got by with



a standard ST-1 (£17,545) as it still has DAB, but when you're covering a large number of miles and spending a lot of time behind the wheel, the little luxuries are very nice to have.

The Fiesta's satnav looked a little rudimentary at first, and the screen seemed tiny, but it was actually very good. It accepted full postcodes and the mapping, although simple, was clear. Ease of use and clarity of navigation were not plaudits that could be heaped upon the radio, however. I like Sony, I have a television and a camera made by the trusted Japanese giant, but the radio in the Fiesta has to be one of the most unfathomable pieces of technology I have ever done battle with. Submenu upon submenu left me in a maze of frequencies out of which the myriad buttons seemed unable to guide me. Once I found a station it was imperative that I saved it as a preset, otherwise I might never find the channel again.

On the subject of things that could potentially irritate, I'll mention just two other things. Firstly, the ride was firm. Every time I returned to the ST after an absence I was surprised how stiffly sprung it felt. However, I was equally surprised by how quickly I always got used to it again and then felt perfectly comfortable even on long journeys. The second issue was also to do with comfort - the seats. Hoved them. Apart from being set a touch too high, they held me in all the right places, warmed the cockles on a winter's morn and generally did a splendid job. I wasn't alone in my satisfaction either, but others hated them. Jethro Bovingdon said the headrests tickled the back of his hair and photographer Dean Smith complained even more than usual about his back. Try before you buy.

Nobody could ever complain about the Ford's fuel consumption. A consistent mpg average in the high 30s was remarkable given the eagerness of the 1.6-litre turbo and the subsequent thrashings it would receive. I also treated the ST to superunleaded when I could, as the engine seemed to respond well to it and gain a little more aggression.

Of course, the other thing that gave the engine more *oomph* was the Mountune upgrade (£659), which lifted power from 179 to 212bhp and was fitted at around the same time as the ST's only service (£169). The results were subtle, but effective – I think it's something to have done after you've run the car in standard trim for a while, just so you appreciate the improvement.

I also changed the tyres several times, and although a set of ContiSportContact 5s (£447.96) undoubtedly gave the Fiesta more grip, I felt the slightly less adhesive OE Bridgestones (£348.56) were more in keeping with the playful character of the car. Meanwhile, the winter-spec Pirelli Sottozeros

(£302.76) I briefly ran were grippier than expected.

At the end of the day what really made the Fiesta ST such a joyous thing to live with was that every journey was fun. Of course it would three-wheel and lift-off oversteer like a good 'un, but you didn't have to be doing ludicrous speeds to extract some brilliance from the chassis or appreciate the lovely gearshift. I hope I'm not about to lose my job, but if I do get into ill-advised fisticuffs at least I know I'll still be able to afford a truly brilliant car.

Henry Catchpole (@Henry Catchpole)

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Lancia Delta Integrale

Every owner of a homologation model wonders what their car might feel like let off the lead. Integrale-driver Lane gets to find out

DOLLED UP IN 1992
Lombard RAC Rally livery,
Nick Bartlett's Lancia
Integrale Evo looks, well, mindblowingly cool. But here's the thing:
it isn't some stickered wannabe.
Neither is it a shed-spec rally
convert. Nope. I've schlepped to
Cheshire because this car is perhaps
the finest works replica of its kind,
having been built with no shortage
of expertise, obsession and, for want
of a better word, cash.

Gorging on my attention like a black hole, it's parked outside a long outhouse that serves as a workshop

for Bartlett and Derek Ingram. The latter's knowledge of these fearsome machines (whether that's fearsomely fast or fearsomely faulty I'll leave you to decide) dates from his days as a dealership mechanic. and his aptitude for Lancia-based problem solving is formidable. Bartlett, meanwhile, is a successful lawyer whose hobby is - wait for it – optimising Integrales for rally or road use. Long story short, I'm about to experience what a full-blown Group A car feels like in comparison to my homologated version. Excited? Somewhat.

But first the detail. The chassis is the real deal, being seam-welded and upgraded to full Abarth Group A Evolution spec using a factorysupplied 28-plate kit and wide-arch panels. Under the shell it gets better still. Without the obligation to accede to competition regulations and with modern technology at his disposal, Bartlett has been able to tastefully uprate almost everything while respecting the blueprint. There's a new four-cylinder block with forged pistons and conrods, an improved crankshaft, racing camshafts, ported heads, bespoke pistons and valves, and a modified turbo.

That last item is a Garrett GT30

mapped to deliver 2.2bar (yes, that's absolute pressure) and aided by two Esprit 300 Sport chargecoolers welded together in place of an intercooler. Torque is sent through a five-speed Tran-X manual gearbox with shorter, homologated ratios to a central Ferguson diff. From there it's distributed to fancy plated limited-slip diffs from ZF on each axle. Finally, and indeed bringing about much of the engine's power, is a straight-through Group A exhaust of three-inch bore.

Keeping the show on the road are rare triple-rate Bilstein coilovers set in tarmac configuration, while AP Racing brakes sit behind each of the spotless Speedline wheels.

The changes have transformed an already squat and snouty machine into something that seems indestructible and goes like... Well, I'll soon find out, but it's not exactly going to be slow. Not with 501bhp and a 400lb ft umbrella of thrust between 3600 and 6400rpm.

It's a sunny, tepid day but a flash shower has left an unnerving sheen of moisture on the road. Having convoyed to the foot of the Horseshoe Pass, Bartlett's son Will is now guarding my own Integrale in a pub car park while the so-called adults head out with nothing but

a set of cold Toyo R888s and a roll-cage for security. Am I scared? No. Uneasy? A smidge. This car might be getting on for £90,000 in material parts but it's the emotional investment slathered into every nook and cranny of its being that's a little intimidating.

What's more, from the nonchalant way Bartlett proffers me the Kevlar driver's-side Recaro, I can tell he has no idea I'm about to lose my rally car virginity. And the driving position is a million miles from that of a standard Integrale. Knees pointing slightly upwards, the suede steering wheel feels awkwardly high at first, almost eye-level, although the pedal box is a comfortable stretch away. The Motec digital dash is also a peach, and I can see the rev-limiter set just shy of an 8000rpm red line.

Five clicks of a Sabelt harness. The soft snick of a fuel pump toggle to prime the bomb. Ignition. It's loud, so shatteringly loud we have to shout at each other through impish grins. The unprocessed noise is recognisably Integrale, although equal-length tubing on the exhaust manifold lends it a more uniform tone than my car. The flywheel spins with so little inertia that toeing the throttle sees the revs rocket up then plummet in a heartbeat. Bartlett politely resists



Left: rally rules capped power at 299bhp, yet most Group A 'Grales still possessed 365bhp. This car (parked beside Lane's own Lancia) boasts a handy 501bhp and weights just 1100kg

the urge to shout even more loudly as I stall the car not once but twice, and then we're away in a barrage of revs. screaming camshafts and wastegate whistle.

Just like in my car, visibility is panoramic, but thanks to a melange of trepidation and unfamiliarity, this car feels enormous, spreading its girth across the road, as if the box arches are casting a shadow over each painted white line. Hardly helping matters is the frigid rubber, which feels wooden, and more than once an individual rear tyre spins up fleetingly. We're not going to get a chance to lean on the chassis today, methinks.

Boot it hard on a straight and the experience is more Porsche GT3 RS than eight-valve hot hatch. At first the only sensation of note is the noise, which is immediately painfully rowdy. Explosive motion arrives not long after, at around 3500rpm, when the torque finally curls its fingers around the driveline. It's a spine-tingling moment and the Integrale begins to take carnivorous bites out of the onrushing road. That wall of torque is every single bit as extreme in reality as it sounded on paper.

The tiny portion of insight as to

'This car isn't some stickered wannabe, it's perhaps the finest works replica Integrale of its kind'

the exploits of Kankkunen, Biasion and Alén that this car is indelibly imprinting onto my conscious is humbling. What a terrifying, crazy thing it would have been to race this ugly-beautiful weapon across Kenya, Corsica, and indeed the UK. Let me rephrase that: what utter missiles these cars must have been in those hands

Bartlett offers me a drive in his Integrale Evo road car before we wrap things up. Obviously, I accept. The Monza Red 1992 example has been stoked to 370bhp yet feels factory fresh. It's a revelation, the chassis performing in tempo with the variables of engine power and road surface. Remarkably, there isn't even the hint of a rattle as we thunder down a B-road at an appreciable speed.

Within two miles I know that this is the loveliest car I've ever driven, which aged 26 isn't saying much. And yet it's proof that pedigrees, at least, can learn new tricks. These things are simply unbeatable. Richard Lane (@_rlane_)

Date acquired	August 2013
Total mileage	88,852
Mileage this month	366
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	25.2

Caterham Seven 420R

Web editor Skipworth is selected to take delivery of evo's twice-built British sports car



TO SAY I WAS EXCITED about collecting evo's new 420R from Caterham's HQ in Crawley is an understatement: after all, it's not often that we get to drive away in a machine that we built ourselves. Although perhaps I should clarify exactly what I mean by the term 'built'...

For most people who order their Seven in kit form, that means assembling parts, starting up the engine and heading out onto the open road. For us, and this is important, building a Caterham also included the moment when the entire front end was taken apart and put back together again by professionals.

Even so, being handed the owner's manual and watching on as the covers were lifted off the car felt hugely special. Not least because, seen fully assembled, our chosen spec is seriously impressive. The 'Lunar Grey' paintjob is perfectly offset by the dayglo green '7' on the front grille, while the evo logos stitched into the headrests are the icing on the cake.

As for all the carbonfibre we decided to option, it looks brilliant, particularly on the dash, where it takes the place of the traditional vinyl-wrapped panel that has

always felt like the most vintage part of any Caterham.

This car has got a tough life ahead of it. In fact it's already been at the mercy of Jethro Boyingdon at one of our track evenings, and that was when it was barely even run in! Moreover, every man and his dog at evo Towers is keen to put some miles on the Seven, which of course is unsurprising given its tantalising recipe for performance.

But in some ways it's a shame that the build phase of our 420R is now over. Admittedly, it didn't all go to plan for us, but speccing and attempting to put together a car is about as involved as you can get with something new. We all played some part in bringing our Caterham to life and for that I think we feel even more attached to the thing than we might otherwise.

That said, knowing that the front-end won't now fall to pieces mid-corner will probably help us enjoy driving it all the more.

Hunter Skipworth (@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired	August 2015
Total mileage	1835
Mileage this month	1835
Costs this month	£160 (service)
mpg this month	39.5



END OF TERM

Kia Proceed GT

Staff photographer Parrott reflects on **evo**'s time with Kia's first entry into the fierce hot hatch arena THE PROCEED GT WAS a valuable member of evo's Fast Fleet from the moment it arrived in May last year. But after 14 months and nearly 27,000 miles, we finally had to hand the keys back to Kia.

A higher-spec 'Tech' version, its new price tag was nearly £23,000. For that you get a seven-inch touchscreen satnav, Bluetooth music streaming, heated Recaro seats, a reversing camera and other goodies. So while the Kia might not have been the fastest hatch ever to grace our fleet, it always felt modern, with useful technology dotted around a stylish interior. The svelte exterior design was also a positive talking point, aside perhaps from those fussy 'ice cube' LEDs. Editor Nick Trott, our Kia's first 'owner', went as far as to call the GT 'the most cleverly styled and attractive three-door hatch on sale'

The GT, remember, is Kia's first attempt at acknowledging the thrill of driving. It's built specifically for the European market and boasts a 1.6-litre, direct-injection, twinscroll-turbocharged engine with continuously variable valve timing. The result is 201bhp at 6000rpm and 195lb ft between 1750 and 4500rpm.

The problem is that these healthy figures are somewhat blunted by a 1448kg kerb weight. This meant that when I wanted to get a move on, the four-cylinder powerplant often felt a little strained – 0-62mph was dispatched in a lacklustre 7.4sec – and I really had to push the car to get any real excitement or response out of it. However, as **evo** subeditor Richard Lane also noted, the front axle frequently wouldn't settle on bumpy back roads, so the tyres would struggle for grip and traction when all you wanted to do was hustle the thing along.

In **evo** 207 we learned how to extract the most from the GT when it took part in a big hot hatch group test. It was Jethro Bovingdon's first encounter with the car and he was pleasantly surprised by its low down driving position and how its steering was light yet still had a nice rate of response. After spending some time getting to know it, he explained that, as there was no limited-slip diff, if you wanted to find some movement in the body it required persuasion rather than coercion, otherwise you'd just overload the front tyres and end up with messy wheelspin and understeer.

'Get too eager with the nower

and the limitations of the front end are easy to discover,' Jethro wrote. 'Better to smoothly guide the GT into a corner, use the natural tendency for the rear of the car to adopt a little attitude, then gradually load up the front tyres with the available torque.' After adopting this approach to driving the GT quickly, I began to sample just what Jethro had explained. Indeed, the Kia could be a fun and involving hot hatch.

In terms of running costs, there was just one service, at around 14,000 miles. It cost £838, but that did include a set of Michelin Pilot Sport 3 tyres and new front brake pads. The front discs were also replaced, but these were covered under warranty as the demise of the originals was considered premature Regularly chasing everything from superminis to supercars while loaded up with heavy photography

So, in all our time together, what did we learn about the GT? Chiefly that it's a great looking and comfortable car that has no issues covering large distances. It can slip into your life without hassle thanks to its high-tech but ergonomically sound interior. The 1.6-litre motor is a little bit off the page compared



Kia Proceed GT Mini John Cooper Works

'We hope Kia can carry on developing the car with maybe a little more power and improved feedback'

to other hot hatch engines, but it delivers excellent fuel economy even if you're using its performance often.

The Kia Proceed GT is not a great hot hatch, then – it doesn't have the performance or feel of its rivals. It is, however, an excellent first attempt at the genre. We hope Kia can carry on developing the model with maybe with a little more power and improved feedback. If that happens we might all be looking at a future Golf GTI rival.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	May 2014
Duration of test	14 months
Total test mileage	26,707
Overall mpg	31.9
Costs	£828
Purchase price	£22,985
Trade-in value	£14,950
Depreciation	£8035



Above and left: the Kia has a mobile rear axle if you can make the front-end stick. **Below:** the driving position was generally liked, as were the supportive Recaros





Mini John Cooper Works

Having given the JCW's auto 'box the thumbs up, Eveleigh turns his attention to its tyres

YOU PROBABLY KNOW by now that we have our doubts about the JCW's tyres. They're Pirelli P7 Cinturatos, which Pirelli's website describes as 'the high performance tyre for medium to high-powered cars. A perfect combination of low rolling resistance, plastic and acoustic comfort, good mileage guaranteeing the Pirelli braking and handling performances.' Er. right. Perhaps more informative is that they're branded as a 'touring' summer tyre, rather than a 'sporty' one, like the P Zero.

What does this mean on the JCW? Try to turn the car into mid-speed corners too quickly and you'll be greeted with light

understeer and the kind of screeching noises usually reserved for Teflon-tyred holiday hire cars being driven on dusty, sun-baked tarmac. This is actually quite amusing at times, not least on one particularly shiny roundabout on my route home, where the Mini will squeal all the way round, the traction control not batting an eyelid. But when you're on a good road and wanting a 'proper' drive, that lack of bite can be frustrating, particularly as being able to execute rapid direction changes and dart into a corner is what Minis are known for.

Past the apex, though, things are largely fine. On dry roads you can simply floor the throttle and the Electronic Differential Lock Control does an excellent job of ensuring both front wheels pull the car straight with maximum traction and no wheelspin. EDLC is a brake-based system, so it's not quite as effective as a true limited-slip diff, but it does its job well without feeling like it's restricting your progress. In fact, its effect is more apparent than in

the R56 Mini GP I ran a while back, probably because it's working harder to avoid wheelspin with the less-grippy rubber.

It's under braking where the Pirellis bug me most, though. I seem to have triggered the ABS far more frequently and easily in this JCW than in any other performance car I can recall. Trailbraking, or even just braking hard with a small amount of lock, soon gets the pedal pulsing. This knocks your confidence in the car's ability to shed speed cleanly, which is a shame, as the optional paddleshift gearbox positively encourages late braking. It also feels like you're not getting the best of the generous 330mm Brembos that the JCW has

Ultimately, I think we need to try the JCW on some grippier tyres. I reckon they could transform it. ■ Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	May 2015
Total mileage	5656
Mileage this month	1851
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	35.6

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NEW ARRIVALS

McLaren P1 & 650S Spider

SSO replaces his McLaren 12C Spider with a newer, faster 650S Spider. And a 903bhp P1 hypercar

TO START WITH I WOULD like to dispel the rumours that the 650S Spider came as a gift with the purchase of – or was part of a buy-one-get-one-free deal on – the P1. While I did hint that either would be highly appreciated, I was politely informed that McLaren's trading approach is very different to Tesco's. In fact these two acquisitions were not directly related and it was only a coincidence that their deliveries almost overlapped. The Spider arrived first; the P1 ten days later.

As my new daily driver, in the first three weeks of ownership the

650S has already accumulated a third of the mileage I put on my old 12C Spider in a full year. A short road-trip in week two was the perfect opportunity to spend some extended quality time in it.

Compared to the 12C the ride is definitely more compliant on poor surfaces, but it's the increase in torque that stands out most. In the 12C, if I was just cruising on the highway at roughly the speed limit, I would always do so in sixth gear, as seventh left you with no power to accelerate. In the 650S, you can cruise in seventh and the car will pick up the pace quickly with a jab of your right foot. With the massive ceramic rotors, braking feels slightly improved. Turn-in is also a bit sharper. Do I think the 650S is a step-change over the 12C? No, but it is a solid evolution that improves in a number of key areas.

Unlike the delivery handover of the 650S Spider, which was basically 'Here are the keys. You probably know the car as well as we do,' taking delivery of the PI was an extended educational process. While the general layout and controls are familiar McLaren, there are a number of new buttons and settings to learn. School on how to activate Race mode, DRS, IPAS, E-mode and raise



or lower the rear wing lasted about 30 minutes before we moved on to setting up the battery charger. The charger is massive and must weigh at least 10kg. It connects to a port under a flap on the left-hand side of the roof. Keeping the batteries fully charged is critical. If the P1 is not being driven for more than a few days, it needs to be on the charger. If the batteries go flat, replacement is needed at a cost north of \$50,000.

Unlike other hypercars I've owned, the P1 is not intimidating to drive at first. It feels quite compact, the sightlines are excellent and it's easy to place on the road. After my Koenigsegg CCR and Ferrari F40, the cacophony of noises happening right behind me feels reassuringly familiar.

The P1 is hard, brutal and more race than road car. However, with the push of a few buttons it manages to

be far more civilised than any other car I have driven in this category. Of the miles I've done so far, half have been on the highway just so I could start to get a feeling for 903bhp. First impressions? The P1 is in a league of its own.

I've only put 31 miles on the P1. A software upgrade was issued as I took delivery, so it's gone back to the local McLaren service centre to have its IQ increased. Once it's back I have a short road-trip planned and then I'm aiming to get it out on the track by the end of October.

■

Secret Supercar Owner (@SupercarOwner)

 Date acquired
 July 2015

 Total mileage
 130 (P1), 630 (650S)

 Mileage this month
 31 (P1), 580 (650S)

 Costs this month
 60

 mpg this month
 15.0 (P1), 17.0 (650S)



VW Golf GTI

Allen key to hand, Parrott gets to grips with the GTI's new suspension

RECENTLY MY WEEKENDS have been very chaotic, what with moving into a new abode and catching flights to and from photoshoots in far-flung places. It all meant that when I finally

had a free weekend I only wanted to do one thing – drive the GTI.

As it happened, **evo** managing editor Stuart Gallagher had recently told me about a nice drive to the Hare, just outside Chelmsford. The pub holds a car meet on the first weekend of every month and serves a tasty full English breakfast too, so on the first Saturday morning of last month I set out with my dad.

After a short blast up the

After a short blast up the motorway we hit open country B-roads, which was my first real chance to feel how the GTI's new ST XTA coilovers handle rough British roads. To my delight they were superb. offering up lots of feedback

through the steering wheel and dramatically less body roll than my previous setup. The Golf's front axle also now seems to better resist deflection from potholes and tramlines.

The drive down was immense, and so was the selection of cars at the Hare: we arrived to see a Ferrari 458 Speciale, TVR Sagaris and an Aston Martin Vanquish, among others.

While at the pub I took the

While at the pub I took the opportunity to play with the damper settings of the GTI's new suspension, as I felt the front end could be a little pointier in corners. That meant inserting an Allen key into the top of the coilovers and softening the

fronts by a few clicks (there are 19 clicks overall). The process is pleasantly straightforward.

Now, I realise that there may be an element of placebo effect at work here, but during the drive back the GTI seemed to find more purchase on turn-in, with the rear rotating more easily when I really chucked the car into a bend. Time for some more experimentation.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott

Date acquired April 2012
Total mileage 176,119
Aileage this month £0
mpg this month 28.8



SEAT Leon ST Cupra 280

SEAT Leon ST Cupra 280

evo's staff photographer endures tyre woes

AS IF HAVING TO SHOOT the new Evora 400 on the wettest day imaginable (see evo 213) then driving home on half-flooded motorways on a Friday night was not bad enough, the Cupra's warning light suddenly appeared with the message: 'Check offside rear tyre pressure.'

Great. I decided the safest thing to do was to carry on driving until I found a service station, but within five minutes I started to feel the vibrations associated with a flat tyre, so I pulled over onto the hard

shoulder, turned on the hazard lights, grabbed my coat and got out to have a look. The tyre was visibly low. By the time I had retrieved the wheel wrench, jack and locking nut key, it was as flat as a pancake.

Torrential rain was now starting to flood the drain next to me so I wanted to sort things out as quickly as possible. Annoyingly, the SEAT has black plastic caps over the wheel bolts, which in the wet are a right pain to remove. Eventually, though, the wheel was off and the spaces aver fitted. As no man on this planet has ever looked at the manual before changing a wheel, I hoped that the spaces aver wouldn't grind on the caliper, as happened to Dickie Meaden on his Renault Mégane (evo 210). Thankfully there was plenty of clearance and I was soon back safely in the car and on my way



home – at a top speed of 50mph.

At home I checked the other tyres and was surprised to see an unusual amount of wear on one of the four grooves on the front tyres. The erosion looked more in keeping with camber wear and I am now interested to see what SEAT makes of it. The Cupra has only done 8000 or so miles and the Bridgestone Potenzas have generally been a nice

match for the car's performance.
Fast tyre wear can be eye-wateringly expensive, however, so I'm keen to get to the bottom of this. ■

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	May 2015
Total mileage	8488
Mileage this month	1677
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	33.0



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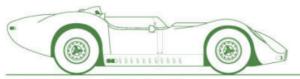
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Ford Focus RS

New brakes for our fast Ford as Lane chases better fade resistance

WITH NEW DISCS AND pads, at least one of the two current areas of concern on the Focus has been seen to this month. Unfortunately the exhaust's broken rear hanger and subsequent bongo soundtrack (see evo 212) is still a source of frustration, but I'm pleased to say a fix is on the way.

Now, the new brake hardware. There's nothing wrong with the standard Brembo setup, which includes 325mm discs at the front. It's a joyous bit of over-engineering responsible for one of the car's best traits – the ability to vaporise colossal momentum quickly and accurately. And yet when it came to replacement, an innate desire to tinker led me to consider different options. Executed properly, things could only get better, right?



Perhaps; perhaps not. Given that in factory spec the car stops from 60mph in the same distance as the lighter, more generously tyred Alfa 4C, you could argue that the standard hardware provides as much stopping power as can be reasonably expected without resorting to trick rubber or suspension. Certainly on public roads the only occasion you'd need quite so much stopping power would be in a bona fide emergency.

What made up my mind was that a couple of fairly relaxed track

outings at Bedford Autodrome had yielded vibration from thermal distortion and significantly lengthened pedal travel after just a few laps, so there clearly were limitations to the OE products.

In the end I plumped for EBC's 'bladed' BSD discs with Yellowstuff pads, which on paper should be easy to modulate while offering greater fade resistance. The firm has also given me the opportunity to try some pre-production braided brake lines, which seem to have nicely raised the bite point without

sacrificing any feel at all.

I've only recently picked the RS up from Tyres Northampton so everything's still bedding in. My hunch, however, is that this disc/pad combination is going to perform at least as well as the impressive standard items do.

■

Richard Lane (@ rlane)

Date acquired	January 2015
Total mileage	71,065
Mileage this month	610
Costs this month	£604.75 (discs, pads)
mpg this month	26.6

Mazda MX-5 Mk1

Mazda MX-5

Ingram finds a way to make his car more rigid



THUD. TAKAKAKAKAKAKA thud. Bvvvvt takakakaka thud. Thud-ud-ud-ud.

There are times, as I commute to and from the office, that I wonder if cattle tracks on the Mongolian steppe aren't better surfaced than the roads around Wellingborough.

Few cars truly smother the ripples and holes, but my Eunos is worse than most. I suspect some of its torsional stiffness has departed over the last two decades, contributing to the cacophony. Mitigating the flex has recently become an all-consuming pursuit. You could make an Ariel Atom from the various bits

of tubing available to counteract MX-5 floppiness, but during this hunt I discovered Garage Star.

The California firm sells various ancillary items for the 'Miata' brackets, dress-up kits, decals and similar. It also sells Delrin door bushings. Standard rubber bushings help locate the door when it closes and prevent it from rattling around in the frame as the body flexes, but they're easily compressed and often lose their shape over time. Delrin is a tough thermoplastic used to make, among other things, knife handles, ski bindings and plectrums. When machined to tight tolerances and used to replace the standard door blocks, they do something remarkable. They help stiffen the MX-5's chassis.

By forming a closer fit with the door, they use it as a chassis brace,



going some way to closing up the big gap in the structure that doors unfortunately create. Even more remarkably, they actually work. No, they aren't as effective as yards of metal bolted to the car's hard points, but at a stroke the little blocks have eliminated most of the car's rattles. They've even stopped some squeaks and shudders I didn't even realise existed – until they became conspicuous by their absence.

Would I recommend them? Absolutely. In fact, I'd call them essential – the next must-have step after new tyres and an alignment on a newly bought MX-5. ■

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	February 2015
Total mileage	92,969
Mileage this month	970
Costs this month	£42 (door bushings)
mpg this month	34.5



Tried & Tested



SPARCO R100 VINYL RECLINING SPORT SEATS

£199 each sportseats4u.co.uk

Fed up with the high-set standard chairs in my Clio 182, I set about finding a pair of affordable sports seats to replace them. My search on GSM Performance's website was short, as a pair of vinyl Sparco R100s soon caught my attention. With contrasting white stitching and ribbed backs, they looked the part.

Mounted on OMP subframes and rails, the R100s sit low, but not too low, thanks to a thick layer of cushioning on the base. This generous but firm padding ensures the seat is remarkably

comfortable and provides plenty of support to my lower back on long drives.

The side bolstering is good, though the leg bolsters are a little low, and since the reclining mechanism folds only the seat-back forward, accessing the rear bench can be tricky. The vinyl also gets incredibly hot on a warm, sunny day, but it does at least seem to be very durable.

Overall, the look, feel and shape of the Sparco R100s mean they're great value for money.

Sam Sheehan (@evoSamSheehan)

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SONAX XTREME WHEEL CLEANER PLUS

£11.95 cleanyourcar.co.uk

Cleaning alloy wheels can be a tedious and tiresome process – I should know; I used to have white wheels on my Clio 182. There are plenty of wheel-cleaning products on the market that claim to keep dirt from sticking to alloys, and Sonax's spray, which uses nano-tech to create a protective layer, is one of them.

In practice it works very well, and makes cleaning filthy wheels noticeably easier. Even weeks after applying the product, a simple jet wash will see most brake dust displaced immediately. It's also non-acidic, so won't damage your wheels with prolonged use.

The best motoring products, put through their paces by the **evo** team

JABRA SOLEMATE PORTABLE BLUETOOTH SPEAKER

£129.99 jabra.co.uk

Jabra's Coke-bottle-sized Solemate is probably the most enthusiastic portable speaker on the planet. Once introduced, it connects automatically to your phone via Bluetooth, announcing that it has done so with a 'Solemate connected' message.

It also announces information such as remaining battery life, negating the need for a digital display. Without wanting to sound like I talk to inanimate objects, this does give the speaker a bit of character...

The speakers themselves – there are three of them – can play music as loud as 81dB with a response bandwidth of 120–20000Hz. In short, the Jabra is loud, and can play anything from bass-driven music to the spoken voice.

At eight hours playing time at near maximum volume, battery life is impressive, too. Finally, you can also link devices via an aux cable or USB connection (both are included with the speaker).



CLASSIC CAR PRICE GUIDE, 2015 EDITION

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Our sister publication *Octane*'s latest *Classic Car Price Guide* features almost every car worth knowing about from 1945 to 2000, detailing specs and providing background information for more than 1000 models.

Five values for each car are given:

launch price and prices for excellent condition, good condition, average condition and project condition.

With photographs and commentary throughout, it's a must-have companion for those with an eye on the classic car market. **SS**









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WHY NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY A USED LOTUS

YND6 HEL

by ADAM TOWLER

The second-hand and collector market is waking up to the Elise, Exige and Evora.

But which versions should you buy, and why?

HERE CAN'T BE MANY EVO READERS WHO haven't contemplated buying a used Lotus at some point. Sure, you may well flinch at barstool tales of mechanical fragility and flaky build, but the lure of a driving experience as pure as the Lotus interpretation has a knack of obliterating such concerns.

So, steady yourself for some good news: 'They haven't really changed their values in two years. I'm selling the same Evoras, Exiges and Elises for identical money, now as then.' That's from Jamie Matthews, sales manager at Bell and Colvill (bellandcolvill.co.uk). In these times of rapid financial growth in the classic car market, that statement may seem initially rather underwhelming, but consider this: Jamie is referring to the Lotus models that *haven't*



appreciated; the Series 1 Elise has started to climb, and the price of an S1 Exige has doubled in the past few years. For most of us, this general stability in Lotus values means that we can buy an Elise today and then hope to move it on after a year or two without losing any money. But which model should you go for?

Well, the Elise market is naturally divided into S1 and S2 models. The S1 market for the standard 118bhp car currently starts at around £8000, according to Guy Munday (see 'Expert View'). Anything less and there's usually an issue somewhere, but you'll need £8000 to £10,000 for tidy, respectable cars with decent

history and appealing mileage. The days of the really cheap early Elise are fading, fast.

Both Munday and Andy Betts (the latter of thelotusforums.com) believe the S1 111S, introduced in 1999, is the car to go for if you can find the extra cash. This was the moment the Elise discovered a more boisterous attitude to life, with a 143bhp VVC K-series Rover engine, a closer-ratio gearbox, wider wheels, headlamp covers and an additional rear wing among the improvements. Expect to pay a £2000 premium. The Sport 135, 160 and 190 models are 'the icing on the cake', according to Betts, who adds, 'Just try finding one.'

The S2 models are emphatically better cars by most objective criteria, but they haven't quite acquired the 'modern classic' gloss that their forebears have. That makes the notion of a tidy, £10,000-13,000 early car – such as the S2 111S – a tantalising prospect.

This 111S may still use a K-series engine but it does pack 156bhp, and the Rover unit is a great powerplant if properly looked after. The 189bhp 111R, with its high-revving 1.8-litre Toyota engine, carries a small premium and its peaky power delivery is an acquired taste.

From 2008 the 111R was available in supercharged, 218bhp form, but

these 'SC' models were expensive cars in the dark days of the credit crunch and sales were slow. The facelifted Elises, which arrived in 2011, have a different supercharged engine that makes the same power but in a less frenetic way, and don't forget about the two 'baby' S2 Elises: the 134bhp 1.8-litre S and the later 1.6-litre car of the same power. 'I'd buy a 2008-2010 R with the Probax seats,' says Munday. 'History will show that engine to be good fun and you can't buy them like that any more, and all for under £20,000'.

What, then, of the Elise's closed-roof cousin, the Exige? From a low of £15,000 not many years ago,

'Stable values mean you can buy an Elise today then move it on without loss'

Right: Evora values holding steady. Top right: S1 Exige prices climbing. Far right: S1 Elise starts at £8k



NOW BUY ONE

LOTUS ELISE IIIR (S2) £23,995



bellandcolvill.co.uk 01483 281000

A 2009 car with LED rear lights among other upgrades, this smart Touring Pack-equipped R is finished in classic Ardent Red, which is good news as strong colours sell well on the used Lotus market. The interior boasts Ivory leather and the odometer reads just 16,600 miles, so you'll need strong money to secure this car: it's up for £23,995.

LOTUS ELISE (SI)



paulmattysportscars.co.uk 01527835656

This R-registration Elise built in 1998 is one of the original-specification cars with the 'MMC' aluminium brakes. It's a one-owner car finished in metallic British Racing Green with a Damson Red leather interior. It's also claimed to be entirely original and never even had a radio fitted. This car is top money but very collectable, with 17,000 miles.

LOTUS EXIGE S (S2)



hiltonandmoss.com 01279 813907

This high-spec supercharged Exige from 2008 was ordered new with the 240bhp Performance Pack along with the Touring and Sport Packs and all-important air con. Since then, marque specialist Hangar 111 has tuned it to 298bhp with the aid of a racing-spec charge-cooler and an ECU remap. You can expect it to feel suitably brisk.

LOTUS EVORA 2+2



bellandcolvill.co.uk 01483 281000

Built in 2010, this naturally aspirated Evora is a perfect example of where the market now sits for early versions of Lotus's coupe. Finished in Starlight Black with an Oyster leather interior, it's travelled 38,000 miles and features the Premium, Tech and Sports Packs along with a reversing camera. It also boasts four seats and is up for £29,995.



values for the best Series 1s are now into the £30,000 bracket. Finding a good, original car is key, with engine conversions less desirable in the long run. S2s are much more attainable, with the 2004-on Toyota-engined machines available from £18,000. The extra torque of supercharged models (on sale from 2006) makes them appreciably quicker on the road; think upwards of £23,000 for one of these. The best 240bhp cars have passed £30,000, with special editions such as the Cup and Roger Becker particularly sought after. Even so, Munday wonders whether they have much financial headroom left, and advises going after standard but very low mileage cars for the best return.

As for the Evora, after a positive press reception in 2009 the car struggled and residual values sank. Nevertheless, under its incumbent management, Lotus is keeping faith in the model and with maturity the used market has stabilised, too.

'There was a point where an early

Evora, two years in, looked like being cheaper than a comparable Elise,' says Munday. 'It had lost 50 per cent of its value in three years.' That same naturally aspirated Evora is still hovering around the £30,000 mark, as Matthews attests: 'The values haven't changed for two years. The NA model is a characterful car and it doesn't cost a lot to run – fuel, tax and tyres are a lot less than on the supercharged Evora S.' It's also worth noting that the 2+2 is more

desirable than the two-seater.

With any Lotus, look for a detailed service history by someone reputable. These are sensitive cars that need to be looked after. Be diligent when buying anything with a K-series, but most of all check for accident damage. Repairs done well are fine, but any damage to that aluminium tub and it should be game over.

'There's something for everyone, from £6000 to £36,000,' concludes Munday. Tempting, isn't it?



OPINION

'I BOUGHT ONE'

NEIL REED

2001 Elise S2 Sports Tourer owner

'I can't bring myself to sell it. We've been through so much together. I'm aware that a regular S2 Elise is not the fastest, best handling, most refined or most comfortable car, but it puts a big smile on my face and for £10,000 I don't think I can find another car to match it.'

THE SPECIALIST

JAMIE MATTHEWS

Sales manager, Bell and Colvill Lotus

'If you want to use your S2 Elise for track work, I'd say go straight for the 111R for the second-cam effect of the Toyota engine and its reliability. At between £15,000 and £24,000 they're rock solid and a safe investment. S2 Exiges are starting to creep up in value, too.'

EVO ROAD TESTER

HENRY CATCHPOLE

Features editor, evo magazine

'It might seem like sacrilege to mention the V-word, but don't forget about the Vauxhall VX220. It's not quite as pretty and you'll need to remember the starter button to avoid looking silly, but the 220 is a cracking car. For raw thrills the 197bhp Turbo at around £15,000 is a bargain, too.'

Expert view

GUY MUNDAY

Guy has enjoyed a 27year career selling Lotus cars and set up his own sales company last year.

'The early Elises are good for their collectability. The P- and R-registration cars had aluminium brake discs today I'd urge owners to take them off and wrap them in cotton wool and good. low-mileage cars are harder to find. The 111S is the best compromise, and it looks nice too, but personally I'd have the Sport 160, with its popping-andbanging engine.

'The S2 Elise is a very broad church. The early, standard cars are more desirable with the Sports Tourer pack, and 70 per cent sold had this specification, so it's worth waiting for one.'

Guy also sees the appeal of both the more potent Rover-engined 111S and the Tovotaengined 111R. 'Later S cars often had hard tops and air con, and at £15,000 to £17,000 today that's a really nice car - there's some price overlap with early, higher mileage R cars. Which to go for is a conundrum for the buyer. Having said that, warranty claims dropped by two-thirds overnight with the switch to Toyota power. Don't fear a K-series car. but keep £1000 aside just in case.

'Initially the Exige was difficult to sell, and they were underdeveloped. Now, just get it bought – don't quibble over £500! With the S2 I'd go for the 240 Performance Pack, which included uprated brakes and a roof scoop.

'I also think an early Evora at £30,000 is a nice car to have, but £5000 more gets the supercharged S.'

Cranley Sports & Classics Ltd 07718 385168

HEXAGON



MODERN CLASSICS



Ferrari 360 3.6 Spider 2DR Right Hand Drive



1995 Porsche Carrera 993 RS 3.8 Left Hand Drive



2006 Ferrari 575M Superamerica

HEXAGON



LOTUS



2015 Lotus Evora 3.5 VVT-I V6 Sports Racer LHD



2015 Lotus Evora -3.5 VVT-I V6



2015 Lotus Exige S Club Racer



2015 Lotus Exige S 3.5 VVT-I 2DR

Hexagon Lotus



2015 Lotus Elise S Cup



2015 Lotus Elise 20TH Edition

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www.lotussilverstone.co.uk



2015 Lotus Elise S Cup, Carbon Grey



2014 Lotus Exige S Roadster, Ardent Red



2010 Lotus Evora, Graphite Grey



2015 Lotus Exige S Coupe, Ardent Red



2015 Lotus Elise S, Old English White



2014 Lotus Elise S Club Racer, Formula Red





2011 Lamborghini GALLARDO LP560-4



2007 Ferrari F430 Coupe F1 - Nero Daytona

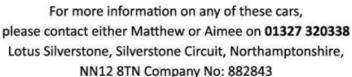


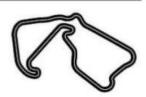


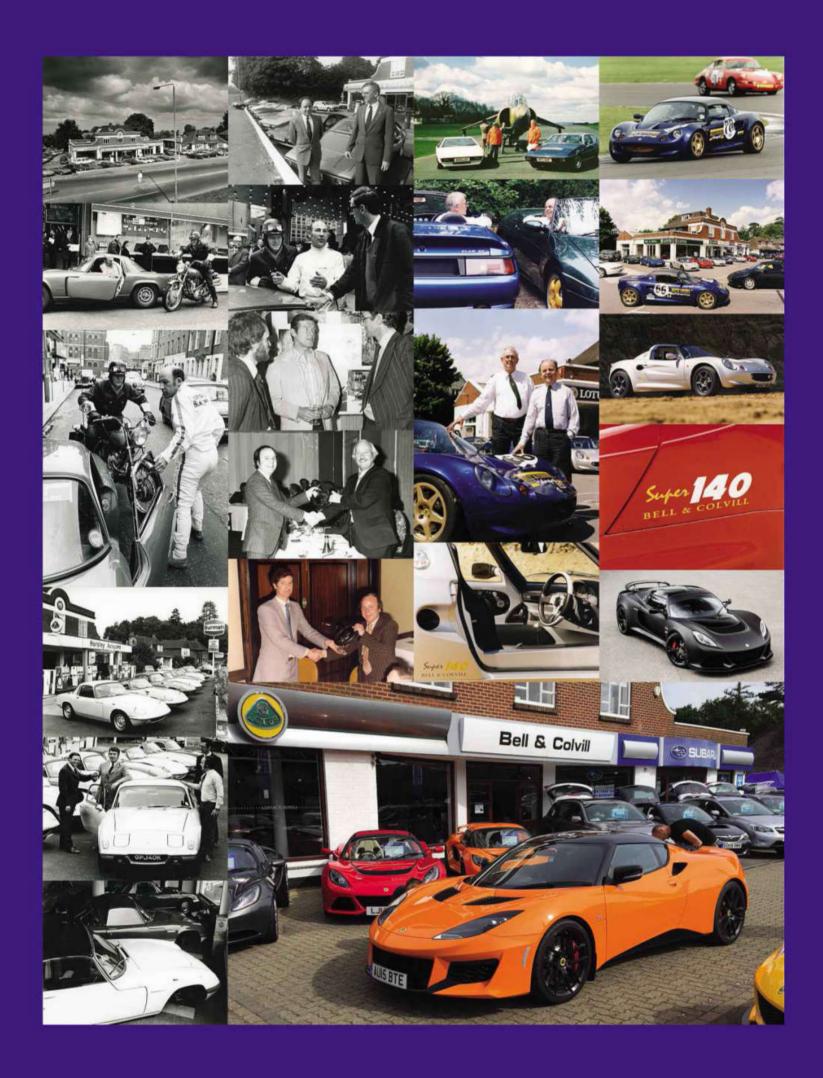














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Fuel Consumption (mpg [l/100 km]) Urban 20.0 - 20.8 (14.1 - 13.6)

Extra Urban 38.7 - 39.8 (7.3-7.1) Combined 29.1 (9.7)CO2 emissions 225 g/km*

*Fuel and CO2 Emissions subject to confirmation by end of August 2015



£20K HOT HATCHES

Few cars are as good to own as a modern hot hatch by Adam Towler motoring have evolved like the hot hatch. Just 20 years ago, 150bhp was still a feisty power figure at the forefront of the class, but in the modern era the notion of 300bhp and 170mph is very much a reality. Going back five years gets you close to that level of performance and that's before any modifications under the bonnet have been made. For cars that also offer seating for four or five and have a decent boot, it makes for a peerless combination of performance and practicality.

Our selection this month covers three well-known major league hot hatches for £20,000 apiece. The Mk2 Ford Focus RS is the odd one out: it's unlikely to be an everyday car unless you enjoy plenty of attention and a ride that's always on the firm side. Nevertheless, its performance is as formidable as its sense of occasion. Our other two exhibits are closely related, and harnessing the excellent VW Group 2-litre TFSI engine with four-wheel drive means they're not to be underestimated. Here's how the three stack up.

FORD FOCUS RS (Mk2)

Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2522cc,

turbo

Power 300bhp @ 6500cpm
Torque 3241b ft @ 2300cpm

Weight 1467kg (208bhp/ton)

0-60mph 5.9sec (tested)
Top speed 163mph (claimed)





'I BOUGHT ONE'

AARON BORG

'Mine's totally standard. I've had it three years and it's never seen rain, but I do go for proper drives when the weather's good. It's never let me down and gets lots of attention, even now. I enjoy every moment driving it, but it's probably too much for most people to use every day. I'm also wary of parking: I'm not comfortable leaving it just anywhere.'

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R (Mk6)

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc,

turbo

Power 266bhp @ 6000rpm

Torque 2581b ft @ 2500-5000rpm Weight 1521kg (178bhp/ton)

O-62mph 5.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 155mph (limited)





'I BOUGHT ONE'

RICHARD NEWTON

'You can blast around in it and no one bats an eyelid. The anonymity is fantastic; people don't have any opinions. That's not been the case with my current Mk7 R. I had a

DSG-equipped Mk6 R from new for three years, and the only problem I had was a creaking sound that was eventually cured. I loved the traction, and did have some great drives in it.'

AUDI S3 (8P)

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc,

turbo

Power 261bhp @ 6000cpm

Torque 2581bft @ 2500-5000cpm Weight 1455kg (183bhp/ton) 0-60mph 5.6sec (tested) Top speed 155mph (limited)



'I BOUGHT ONE'

BEN PARONS

'I had one of the last of the pre-facelift cars, a manual three-door. It was a nice, sensible car – a brilliant car for a family and in bad weather – but it was just a little dull. I had it tuned to 360bhp, which helped and meant I could have a bit of fun. Nothing ever went wrong, but given the big speeds it was quite heavy on tyres and front brake discs and pads.'

RUNNING IT

These cars are reliable and well engineered – over-engineered, even. A split diaphragm in the oil filter housing will restrict boost levels, and you can find clicking from

the driveshafts under acceleration. Just look for good maintenance in the past and minimal owners. Given how desirable they are, you do have to take care when buying one.'

Alastair Mayne, Graham Goode Racing grahamgoode.com, 01162 440080

'This is a great car, and very fast, but no one seemed to really love them when they were new. Be aware of the fuel pump cam bucket: it's only a £25 part but it needs to be changed

regularly, especially on modified cars. Otherwise the engines are fabulous; rock solid. DSG 'box control units can fail, and that's a couple of grand – regular servicing is necessary.'

Matt Walker, Volkswagen Racing volkswagenracing.co.uk, 08456 805088

'Costs are the same as for the Golf R – it's the same drivetrain. It's advisable to regularly check the fuel-pump cam, but also to look for failures within the pump itself as the seals can wear and leak fuel back into the engine. Positive Crankcase Ventilation [PCV] and "dump" or diverter valves can also be a weakness, but overall these are tough cars.'

Kev Hall, Revo revotechnik.com, 01327 301901

EXAMPLES



2010 £21,999

rs-direct.co.uk

RS Direct has plenty of cars for sale, including an Ultimate Green example (with Mountune MP350 kit) just 31,000 miles old.



2011 £20,791

westernvolkswagen.co.uk

A three-door manual example in Rising Blue Metallic, with cloth interior, standard 18in alloys and only 23,000 miles on the clock.



2011 £19,970

listers.co.uk

A Phantom Black three-door model registered in 2011. Manual, 41,000 miles with black leather and a Bose sound system.

HOWARD WISE Cares





PORSCHE 991 GT3 PDK LHD

Brand New - Delivery miles **VAT Qualifying** Agate Grey/Blk

£135,000 + VAT



PORSCHE 991 GT3 PDK LHD

Brand New - Delivery miles **VAT Qualifying** Carrera White/Blk

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PORSCHE 991 GT3 PDK LHD

Brand New - Delivery miles **VAT Qualifying** Viper Green/Blk

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BMW Z8 Alpina

Black/Two-Tone Leather; Hard Top & Stand; 10k mls only

£349,995



MERCEDES GT S Coupe

AMG Solarbeam/Two-Tone Leather; UK Car; VAT Q

£139,995

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TEN YEARS LATER

From 206 to GTD, an evo reader maps out his hot-hatch-rich car ownership history

1st car

Peugeot 206 1.6d LX

'A cherished 206 but how I wished for it to he a GTL I settled for a diesel in white - long before white became popular again.'



KX53 ZXE

2nd car Ford Puma 1.6

'I loved this car. Of course, the Racing Puma was my inspiration, but I settled for the 1.6. Lost it in a series of spins...'

ADAM NIXON

NORTHERN TRELAND



3rd car MG ZR 1.4 Trophy

'Armed with an insurance payout I bought my first new car. To this day I'm sure I could go harder in that MG than any other car I've owned.'



5th car Audi S3

'After a spell with a BMW 118d, I was old enough to insure myself in something properly quick, but in the end I felt the S3 couldn't be enjoyed without reaching epic speeds.'

8th car

VW Golf GTI Mk6

'Following a Mk5 Golf GT TDI, I found my all-time favourite car to own! I loved everything about this car and smiled with every drive. Only the birth of my daughter and a need for five doors was enough to make me sell.



9th car

VW Golf GTD Mk7

'My love-affair with the GTI cemented my feelings for the Golf. The prospect of more work travel meant the Golf GTD was the obvious choice.'



What's next?

'I'm certain my attachment to hot hatches is not yet over. For the next few years, while I enjoy hauling the kids and their kit around. I think a wagon is the way to go. But I'm sure a VW Golf GTI will take pride of place in my garage once again, as soon as the opportunity allows.'

evo's advice

Lease deals on the Golf R are legendary: Golf R Estate it is then, Adam.

The evo take

Adam's car history follows the classic hot hatch path, with Ford's superb coupe-hothatch as the interloper.

Like for many evo readers, his driving career began in something French, even if the derv-sipping 206 wasn't quite the GTI of his dreams. Jumping to the Puma was an expert move, but the resulting write-off perhaps a sign that a lively chassis and inexperience can be a somewhat exciting mix. The MG that followed wasn't the most sophisticated choice, but Adam's faith in its simplistic but clearly signposted ability is reflected in how hard he feels he could push it.

The S3 was his first truly quick car, but like all evo readers, he knew an aloof chassis when he experienced one. That's when the love-affair with the Golf began, even if it started out as more of a lovers' tiff with a noisy diesel. As much as he loved his old GTI. Adam appreciates that the Mk7 GTD is probably a quicker car, and its inherent sophistication means he's probably right.

Most of all, it proves that brand loyalty is alive and well in the car market. We can't see Adam in a Focus ST any time soon.



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Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009 £379,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Larini Sports Exhaust 5,000 miles 2009 £314,990+VAT



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadster Hemera Alloys, Bicolour interior, Ceramic Brakes, 10,000 miles, 2008, £149,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadstar LHD Titanium Hercules Alloys Yellow Brake Calipers Lifting Gear 10,000 miles 2008 £134,990



Lamborghini Gallardo LP560 - 4 Spyder Lifting Gear, Reverse Camera, Electric Heated Seats, 15,000 miles, 2010, £109,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV HIGH SPEC High Level Rear Wing, Ceramic Brakes, Colour Sat Nav, 5,000 miles, 2010, £379,990



Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT Final Edition Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Carbon Fibre Inserts, Carbon Fibre Engine Bay, 20,000 miles, 2000, £164,990



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 LP640 Coupe VAT QUALIFYING Ceramic Brakes, Carbon Fibre Inserts, Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, 6,000 miles, 2008 £149,990



Lamborghini Murcielago VT Coupe Hercules Alloys, Lifting Gear, 18,000 miles, 2005, £114,990



Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 Spyder LHD Lifting Gear Reverse Camera Full Electric Heated Seats 8,000 miles 2009 £104,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Colour SatNav, Ceramic Brakes, High Level Rear Wing, 7,000 miles, 2010, £379,990



Lamborghini Diablo VT Roadster 30,000 miles, 1997, £159,990



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 LP640-4 Coupe 670 SV Body Upgrade DPE 20 Inch Forged Alloys TUBI Exhaust 5,000 miles 2008 £134,990 + VAT



Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 Spyder Q-Citura Stitching, Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, 20,000 miles, 2010, £109,990



Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder Manual, Lifting Gear, Reverse Camera, 27,000 miles, 2007, £74,990

BUYING OR SELLING LAMBORGHINI AUTOMOBILE'S

PORSCHE PANAMERA 2009-PRESENT

Practical, reliable and fast, Porsche's super-saloon is a tempting second-hand buy by Peter Tomalin PORSCHE PURISTS WERE BARELY over the shock of the Cayenne when Stuttgart unleashed its next affront to their sensibilities: a Porsche saloon (or, strictly speaking, a five-door hatch). If they'd known that two years later there'd be a diesel version, some may never have recovered.

The Panamera went on sale in September 2009, initially exclusively with V8 power (the Cayenne's 4.8-litre unit). The line-up was the rear-drive, 394bhp S, a four-wheel-drive 4S, and the 493bhp, four-wheel-drive Turbo. The S came with the choice of a six-speed manual gearbox or a seven-speed dual-clutch PDK, the latter a £2289 option. The 4S and Turbo were only available with PDK.

The four-wheel-drive systems on the 4S and Turbo used a multi-plate clutch and Porsche Traction Management (PTM) to apportion torque front-to-rear, and all models came with Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) and an impressive array of luxury goodies, from full leather to touchscreen satnav, plus a Sport button to sharpen the throttle, suspension and PDK (if fitted). Additional standard kit on the Turbo included air suspension (optional on the S) with

active ride-height adjustment and a Bose hi-fi. Optional on all were ceramic brake discs (PCCB). So it was a technical tour de force. It was also a genuine four-seater with decent luggage space.

February 2010 saw the introduction of a 296bhp 3.2-litre V6; the 247bhp 3-litre V6 diesel was added in August 2011. Both have merits if you do high mileages, as does the Hybrid, which combines a supercharged V6 with an electric motor.

But it's the full-fat V8s we're focusing on here. From 2010, Turbo buyers could specify an £11,118 Powerkit that featured new turbos with titanium-alloy turbine bearings, lifting peak power by 39bhp to 532bhp. Other options introduced at the same time were Porsche Torque Vectoring Plus and the roll-stabilising Porsche Dynamic Chassis Control (PDCC). In March 2011 came the Turbo S with a mighty 542bhp. evo's choice in pure driving terms, though, was the four-wheel-drive GTS. Introduced in 2012, it hiked the naturally aspirated V8 by 30bhp to 424bhp and sharpened the handling. All models got a facelift in July 2013.

If you don't mind the looks, the V8 Panameras are quick, capable and are also proving pleasingly robust. Here's what you need to know.



ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

The good news is that compared to the early V8s in the Cayenne, the Panamera's 4.8-litre unit is proving robust and relatively trouble-free. 'The Cayenne has suffered lots of problems with bore scoring,' says Rajib Bose, director of Porsche specialist 911 SBD. 'We've seen 60 Panamera V8s and

only two have had this problem. One of those had suffered a loss of coolant, causing overheating, so it was really a maintenance issue; the other engine was replaced by Porsche under warranty.

'We've also seen no issues with turbos. We haven't had to refurb or replace any, and that includes one car we see that has now done 125,000 miles.'

Porsche specifies service intervals of 20,000 miles or two years, but Rajib recommends annual servicing to maintain the protective qualities of the oil additives. Part of any service should be clearing debris from the air ducts to the radiators in the nose to prevent corrosion (well worth a visual check when you're viewing a car). Transmissions,

including the PDK gearbox, are proving similarly resilient so far but check underneath for oil leaks. If the gearbox sump is leaking you have to buy a replacement cover, which is at least £300.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

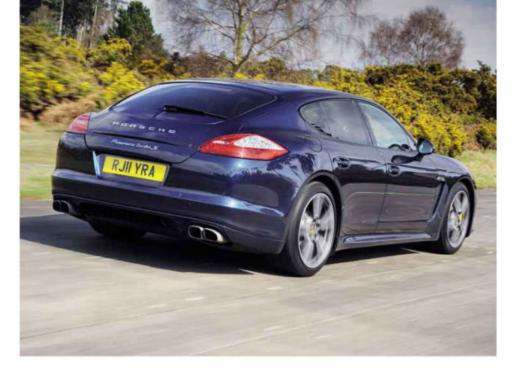
According to Rajib, the main issue with the Panamera, and the one

that could land you with a sizeable bill, is the air suspension.

A leaking air spring is hard to detect unless a car is left standing and you actually notice it sagging. You have to replace the units in pairs and you could easily be looking at a £2000 bill to do so, even from a specialist. The front units tend to be more susceptible to failure, due to the weight of the V8

engine. That same weight also accelerates wear to the lower arms and drop links, so listen for any knocks or clonks.

Pads for the carbonceramic brakes are up to 50 per cent more expensive than for the regular cast-iron items, but the discs themselves aren't an issue. 'We've been here 25 years and never had to replace a ceramic disc,' says Rajib.





Above: Turbo S boasts a heavyweight 542bhp. Left: ceramic brakes standard only on Turbo S. Right: front-mounted V8 proving reliable in all states of tune. Below: interior wears well





BODY, INTERIOR, **ELECTRICS**

There are no issues with corrosion as yet, so you're chiefly checking for signs of accident damage: variable panel gaps, paint mismatching, overspray, etc.

The Panamera's excellent interior is also proving very durable, so be suspicious of excessive wear on cars showing low miles on

the odometer. Unlike in the Cayenne, there are so far no particular recurring issues with the many sophisticated electronic systems, but nevertheless it's advisable to check everything works.

If you want peace of mind, an independent specialist such as 911 SBD will check through any recorded fault codes for around £100 or carry out a full inspection for £420.

THE RIVALS

ASTON MARTIN RAPIDE

With its 5.9-litre V12 (470bhp. 0-62mph in 5.2sec. 188mph all-out) the Rapide offers a more sporting drive than the Panamera but rear space is tight. From £65k.

MASERATI QUATTROPORTE

Around £40k buys a good example of the excellent Sport GTS version (433bhp, 0-62mph in 5.1sec, 177mph), while £50k-60k brings low-mileage 2014-15 Quattroporte S models - which offer similar performance - within reach.

BMW M5 (F10)

There are plenty of current-generation twin-turbo M5s (552bhp, 4.3sec to 62mph, limited to 155mph) for around £40k. If you can stretch to £50k, you've got the pick of low-mileage 2013-14 cars.

INFORMATION

PANAMERA S (TURBO IN BRACKETS)

V8, 4806cc (twin-turbo) Engine

394bhp @ 6500cpm Ромес [493 a 6000]

3691b ft @ 3500-Torque

5000rpm (516 @ 2250-4500)

Transmission Six-speed manual/ seven-speed PDK, rear-wheel drive (PDK, 4WD)

Weight 1770kg (1970) 226bhp/ton (254) Power-to-

weight

0-62mph 5.6sec (4.2) (claimed) 177mph (188) (claimed) Top speed

Price new £72,266 (£95,298)

PARTS PRICES

(Prices from porschecambridge.co.uk for Panamera Turbo. Tyre prices from blackcircles.com, All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges)

£195.40 front, £209.90 rear (Michelin Pilot Super Sport) Tyres (each)

£497.08

Front discs (iron, pair)

Front pads

£276.89

Air spring units (pair)

£1838.04

Exhaust catalyst £1205.18

Exhaust.

£612.83

centre section

Rear muffler £573.72

SERVICING

(Prices from 911sbd.com, including VAT)

Recommended intervals: 12 months or 10,000 miles, whichever sooner

Minor service £240 Major service £480

10,000 MTLES



USEFUL CONTACTS

porscheclubgb.com forums, advice,

porsche.com dealer network, approved

porschebuyersguide.co.uk detailed

charlesivey.com independent

911sbd.com independent specialist classicandperformancecar.com ads





'I bought one'

DAVID WILLIS

'You could say I've got a Porsche addiction – I'm currently on my eleventh – so when the Panamera was launched I had to go and have a look and a drive. I was taken with the interior quality, the ride and the performance, and the looks didn't offend my eyes either. But the timing wasn't right. Fast forward a few years and a rather nice Panamera 4S appeared at a local dealer. Two hours later I'd traded my Cayenne Hybrid for it!

'The car proved that the impossible could be done. Fast comfort for four, plus dog, roof box and bikes, yet when I was on my own I could wind up the wick and it laid down 394bhp with a growling V8 soundtrack through a sports exhaust. I covered 20,000 miles in that car.

'Fast forward another year or so and I got a call from another OPC that had a 2013 Panamera

Turbo – one year old. SportDesign exterior, lots of carbon bits and most extras boxes ticked. The joys of that first-owner depreciation hit! Two hours later I was driving home in that!

'This car has done everything. I've taken four adults – plus the dog and roof box – from one end of the country to the other and back in absolute stress-free comfort. It's also been on a track, in the sodden rain, and it was the fastest car of the day by a long shot. It's been round the *Top Gear* test track, holding its own against Aventadors, an LFA and a 918 – well, nearly! And it's been down the runway at Bruntingthorpe with 190mph on the VBOX. With three passengers.

'In 10,000 miles it's cost me nothing to run other than a service at a price that surprised me – in a good way!'

WHAT WE SAID



PANAMERA S FIRST DRIVE

'The big V8 is quiet at idle and at a cruise, a little gruff when worked hard, and sends the Panamera up the road with just about enough shove to earn it performance saloon status. The PDK is superb, as responsive as in the 911 but even smoother.

'Initially the steering feels a little light and the brake pedal a tad mushy at the top of its travel. Happily, above town speeds the whole car sharpens up. We found some fast, flowing roads and the Panamera devoured them. Turn in and there's no pause to steady, no second bite, the big Porsche simply goes in clean and absolutely on line – for a heavy saloon it's reassuringly accurate and makes light of its mass.' – evo 133 (August 2009)

PANAMERA TURBO FIRST DRIVE

'Be in no doubt, the Turbo is remarkably rapid; on the Autobahns south of Munich I saw an indicated 300kph (186mph) every time the road conditions allowed.

'Take it off the highway and up into the mountains and the Turbo remains unflappable even as the roads become twisty. It feels solid rather than heavy and its accuracy and tidiness mean that its size rarely becomes an issue... even if the driving experience doesn't get right under your skin. The real issue is the level of detail through the steering. Sadly, it's more Cayenne than Cayman.' – evo 134 (September 2009)

IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

2011 PANAMERA 4S £42,850

43,165 miles Yachting Blue/black 20in Turbo alloys Sport Chrono Bose PCM/satnav

sytner.co.uk



2010 (10) PANAMERA TURBO £48,888

47,000 miles
Basalt Black/black
Sports exhaust
Sport Chrono
FPSH
Electric sunroof
ict9.com



2012 (62) PANAMERA GTS £66.850

27,254 miles GT Silver/black One owner Facelifted car Bose PCM/satnav



WHAT TO PAY

Plenty of V6 and diesel examples can be had for between £35,000 and £40,000, and the first V8s also start to appear towards the upper threshold of that budget.

£?40k-70k

Be patient and you should be able to find a good Panamera S or 4S for around £40,000. Turbos start near £50,000 but £60,000+ gives you a wide choice of well-cared-for cars with watertight service histories and big specs (many of these cars would have been more than £100,000 new). The highly rated GTS starts at around £65k.



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2010 Porsche 911 997 3.8 PDK Turbo, 37,000 miles £66,995



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2014 Mercedes-Benz C200 Sport Petrol, VAT Q £25,995



2011 Mercedes-Benz E350, CABRIOLET Auto Sport Convertible, £24,995



2013 Mercedes-Benz E220 CDI AMG Sport Convertible, £30,450



2014 Land Rover Range Rover Sport 3.0 SD V6 HSE, £64,995

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BY

ASTON MARTIN

by Adam Towler

Depreciation-prone Astons are a tempting used buy. Time to scratch that itch?



WENTY YEARS AGO A FOCUS ON THE nearly new Aston Martin market would have been brief and aimed at the financial elite. Today, after more than a decade of 'new era' Astons and relative mass production at Gaydon, the picture is rather different. You can now afford something from the esteemed British marque, but is it a good idea, and which model should you buy?

The original Vanquish (above) was the crossover car: half hand-built Newport Pagnell bruiser and half new-era tech-fest. Prices are definitely on the up according to our expert, Bryan McMorran (see below), but be warned: they're complex cars and you need to do your homework. For example, front subframes corrode and that alone is a £12,000 fix.

The real temptation lurks in those early V8 Vantages and DB9s at prices beginning with a '3'. It's not a purchase to be taken lightly, but the smaller car in particular can be trouble-free. And they're still gorgeous.

Sports Pack-equipped manual DB9s have always been a real favourite of **evo**'s, even if the single-plate clutch and engine calibration make

them clumsy cars to drive at low speed. They're a rare find today, but not the investment choice if you want a manual 'twelve'. That accolade falls to early DBS coupes, thanks to the glittering veneer of 'Bond' status, beauty and all-round ability.

Finally, for all its appeal as a long-distance 2+2 – if not as a genuine saloon car – the Rapide (rear cabin pictured) was a financially troubling prospect for from-new owners thanks to savage depreciation. It's now some 'family car' at £60,000.



Expert view

BRYAN McMORRAN, SALES MANAGER, NICHOLAS MEE ASTON MARTIN

Are Vantages at rock-bottom? Plus why the DBS could be the one to have

'Prices have started to bottom out for the V8 Vantage. You'll need at least £30,000 for the very first cars and they're not getting much cheaper. The key is how they've been looked after, although they're very robust little cars. N400s are very desirable but later special editions less so. Roadsters from 2007 start in the early £40,000s and carry a £5000 premium over the coupes, while 4.7-litre cars start around £45,000.

'The V12 Vantage is a very

different car: it's like owning a lion. They're starting at just under £70,000 now, but there's only a £10,000 range up to 2012 cars as no real changes were made. Buy on mileage, condition and colour. Are they an investment? Yes and no; the only downside is that the V12 Vantage S is such a good car.

'Values are firming on early DB9s, which can be bought for less than the best DB7s now; I just sold a really nice early DB9 for £39,950. Enthusiasts seek

out Sports Pack manual cars, but they're not worth much more. Later cars, from 2009 on, are nicer – from £50,000 – and the Volantes are stiffer, too.

'The Virage is underrated, and for around £80,000 it's the look of a new DB9 for a lot less money, but the absolute find is an early manual DBS. I genuinely believe that's the car: it's a phenomenally good car, a Bond car. It could be the DB5 of the future. You'll need at least £70.000 for a 2007 manual.'

SERIAL BUYER

MARK DONOGHUE

The charm of a British GT car

Mark loves his Astons, as you'd expect from the deputy chairman of the Aston Martin Owners Club (amoc.org). Along with some older examples of the marque, he's owned two DB9 Volantes and is the current custodian of a 2008 DBS manual coupe.

'I told my dealer I wanted a manual gearbox in the DB9 and both times he refused to let me order one,' says Mark. 'I'd given my letter of intent regarding a possible DBS in 2006, when I ordered my first DB9, as Aston Martin have a habit of bringing out a more powerful model a few years after production starts.

'All of my modern cars have been 100 per cent reliable – they've never let me down like the older ones! The DB9s didn't really differ as I bought them so close together – just a year apart – but the DBS is a completely different animal: it was like going from a GT car to a road-racer.

'I would never sell my DBS. I may buy another Aston Martin, but won't get rid of that one. I think you build a relationship with them: they have a personality. It would be like selling your child. It has such a beautiful shape – sometimes I wander down to my garage with a bottle of wine and just look at it.'





HWM OF WALTON ON THAMES



HWM Aston Martin are delighted to offer to market a rare right hand drive One 77.

This One-77 is finished in White Pearl with a Spicy Red leather interior and contrast stitching. It has covered only 1,125 miles since the vehicle was built by Aston Martin's specialist vehicle division. With matching VIN and plaque numbers this example is thought to be one of the last registered. With its 7.3 naturally aspirated V12 producing 750 bhp, and 750 Nm Torque this is the ultimate finale for the raw "Hyper-cars".

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KEEP IT?

Volkswagen Golf GTI Mk6

If you can't face selling your car, take a look at the latest options to upgrade and improve it instead by Antony Ingram

GTI and outpunched by the Golf R, the Mk6 GTI still has plenty of potential, and most of that is locked up in its 2-litre turbocharged engine.

Superchips' popular Bluefin 'plug-in' ECU remap liberates an extra 75bhp and 113lb ft of torque in 'Stage 2' spec for outputs of 282bhp and 320lb ft. The company does, however, say you'll need to install a quality replacement sports catalytic converter, a cat-back exhaust and cold-air intake



system to realise those impressive figures.

Brake and suspension upgrades are also worthwhile. VW specialists Awesome GTI will sell you Tarox front discs for £228, rear discs for £192 and a full set of Tarox pads for £134.40.

A set of KW coilovers comes in at £920, also from Awesome GTI. Then you'll just need some tyres. We'd recommend Continental's ContiSportContact 5s (our Tyre Test 2015 winners), at £279.60 delivered from blackcircles.com for 17-inch wheels.

'Why I kept it'

EDWARD MARSHALL

BMW E46 330Ci

'I bought the 330Ci from a friend who was living in France and wanted to sell the car when they returned to the UK. They didn't want to be lumbered with left-hand drive over here but it didn't bother me.

'The plan wasn't to keep the car for that long, maybe six months or so, but it hasn't let me down in the 12 years I've had it...

'During that time I've come very close to selling it, normally to get something new or nearly new. I've questioned what I'm actually getting for the considerable outlay. I did look at a Subaru Impreza WRX STI – the hatchback version – as I'd owned an original saloon a few years before I got the 330Ci, but the reviews weren't great and when I drove one it didn't deliver on the experience and wasn't as well built as the BMW.

'Others that have been dismissed include an RS3, an E46 M3 and more recently an M235i. With the 2-series, I was looking for a used example but wanted one with the BMW Performance brakes and the limited-slip diff, but it seems only the press cars have those and I can't find one to buy.'

Aftermarket news



ALPINA D3 BITURBO

Alpina has developed its own take on the 3-litre in-line six in the revised BMW 335d. Power swells to 345bhp from 309bhp, with a mighty 516lb ft of torque, and 0-62mph now takes 4.6sec. There are the usual Alpina touches – multi-spoke alloys and the historic Deko Set.



FISKER ROCKET

A reworking of the new Ford Mustang Convertible, the Rocket is the work of California-based Galpin Auto Sports and ex-Aston Martin designer Henrik Fisker. Large scoops in the carbon bodywork feed air to a 725bhp supercharged V8. Though a concept, it will be built to order.



CALLAWAY Z06

Topping even the Rocket's output, US tuner Callaway has supercharged the C7 Corvette Z06 to 757bhp and 777lb ft. A triple-element intercooler keeps temperatures in check while packaging needs necessitate the supercharger housing's bonnet bulge.



BBR SUPER 225

The Super 225 is the most powerful naturally aspirated MX-5 yet from Brackley-based tuner BBR. It takes Mazda's 2-litre unit up to 225hp at 7900rpm and 175lb ft courtesy of individual throttle bodies, new cams, a ram-air filter and revised electronics.



ASK

HP, PCP, FINANCE AND LEASING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Your financial questions answered

ORE THAN 75 PER CENT OF UK new car sales were bought on finance in 2014. But rather than being traditional hire purchase (HP) agreements (where you pay for the car in fixed instalments over a period of time until you own it), the majority were through personal contract purchase (PCP).

Cash is still the cheapest way to pay for you car, followed by a traditional loan from a bank, but to shop around for the best rates you'll need a clean credit score. You will also be hit by the depreciation of the car, which, as many know, can be severe.

HP can be costly compared to a loan, but you can return the car during the period if you need to (although servicing costs may not be included).

PCP offers one of the cheapest monthly payment options, but servicing costs are unlikely to be included and mileage limits will apply (you can 'buy' more miles). There's also the final payment to budget for if you ever want to own the car.

Finally there's leasing, which is like an extended hire car loan. You'll need a minimum of three months repayments as a deposit and you won't own the car at the end of it. Mileage limits will vary.



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MIT Tube



Ratings ★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car

Database

E = new entry this month. * = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. Price is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. Engine is the car's main motor only − additional hybrid tech isn't shown. Weight is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. bhp/ton is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. 0-60mph and 0-100mph figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturer's claims. CO2 g/km is the official EC figure and EC mpg is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

Knowledge

Superminis / Hot Hatches

Name March Deliverial 100		Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Maxmph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Mis Thermore March 100 Countered 14-78 16-79 16-	Abarth 595 Competizione		£18,960	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg		7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
All Sermon Galettes (V. 99) 4. El 2019 4. VITTLE 2, 1975-00 5.												-	-		★★★☆
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Circle DS3 In Fire 1/28 E1475 1/58 5/4/600 1771/600 120/60 120/600 1771/600 120/600 1771/600 120/600 1771/															
### Part Part May 100 PP 157 PF 1578 94/4000 201/2000 74/500 74															
#### Plante Noporting 132 R 06-71 47386 998000 97420 9756 103 95 115 54 435 + Most In parp pound nithe masket: Optional SSY care the furned of ###### Plante Noporting 1410 613.55 1476 81.50 1476 81.50 1476 1															
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Ford Focus ST Mountume 137															
Food Focus ST Mountaine 37R 08-11 5/2522 256/5500 236/2500 339/2500 339/2500 346/78g 208 5.8 14.3 155 224 - + ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS **********************************															
Food Focus RS (Miz)													30.4		
Ford Facus RS 500													20.5		
Food Facus RS (Mikl) 207R 12-96 47-1998 212-5500 229-5500 227-580 179 62 13 + Some are grant- Some are are you drive plenty) ***********************************													30.5		
Ford Puma I.7													-		
Ford Pacing Purma 128										14.9			-		
Ford Racing Puma 128R 70-70 14/1679 1327/000 1104/500 1714/kg 132 7.8 23.2 137 - 347 + Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well **********************************										276			20.2		
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)															
Honda Civic Type R (FN2) 102R 107-TI 4/1998 198/7800 142/5600 1267kg 158 6.8 17.5 146 215 31.0 + Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance															
Honda Civic Type R Champship White 126															
Honda Civic Type R Mugen 195 R 195 R 196 N 197 N 196 N 197 N 197 N 197 N 198 N 197 N 198 N 197 N 198 N 197 N 199 N 197 N 199 N 197 N 199 N 197 N 190												213			
Honda Civic Type R (EP3) O75 R 101-05 4/1998 197/400 145/5900 1204kg 166 6.8 16.9 146 - 31.7 + Potent and great value - Breadvan' looks divide opinion, duff steering ***********************************										_		_	31.0		
Kia Proceed GT 207 R £20,200 4/1591 201/6000 195/1750 1448/g 143 7.4 - 143 171 38.2 + Fun and appealing package - Lacks sharpness and control at its outer edges													21.7		
Lancia Delta Integrale 194 R 88-93 4/1995 207/5750 220/3500 1300kg 162 5.7 - 137 - 2.3.9 + One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only ***********************************															
Mazda 2 1.5 Sport 132 R £13,495 4/1498 102/6000 101/4000 103 kg 107 10.4 - 117 135 48.7 + Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini ************************************															
Mazda 3 MPS 137 R '06-13 4/226l 256/5500 280/3000 1385kg 188 6.3 14.5 155 224 29.4 + Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy ************************************															
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG 194 R £37,845 4/1991 355/6000 332/2250 1480kg 244 4.3 10.6 155 161 40.9 + Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals ***********************************															
Mini Cooper (F56) 190 19		_													
Mini Cooper (F56) 194 D £15,300 3/1499 134/4500 162/1250 1085kg 125 7.9 - 130 105 62.8 + Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling ****** Mini Cooper (F56) 196 D £18,665 4/1998 189/4700 206/1250 1160kg 166 6.8 - 146 133 49.6 + Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays ***** Mini John Cooper Works (F56) 211 R £23,805 4/1998 228/5200 236/1250 1200kg 193 6.3 - 153 155 42.2 + Fast, agile, super-ninble DeT by resplack outright grip ****** Mini Cooper (R58) 164 R £23,805 4/1998 208/6000 206/2000 1175kg 180 6.3 - 149 165 39.8 + The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable helmet 'roof ****** Mini Cooper (R56) 185 F '09-14 4/1598 120/6000 118/4250 1075kg 113 9.1 - 126 127 52.3 + Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S' ****** Mini Cooper S(R56) 149 R '06-14 4/1598 181/5500 177/1600 1140kg 161 7.0 - 142 136 48.7 + New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's ****** Mini John Cooper Works (R56) 184 R '08-14 4/1598 208/6000 206/2000 1160kg 182 7.2 16.7 148 165 39.8 + A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly ****** Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56) 195 R '13-14 4/1598 208/6000 206/2000 1160kg 188 6.3 - 150 165 39.8 + Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes ****** Mini Cooper S(R50) 194 R '02-106 4/1598 186/6000 206/2000 1160kg 188 6.3 - 150 165 39.8 + Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes ****** Mini Cooper S(R50) 144 R '05 4/1598 125/6000 206/2000 1800kg 109 06.5 - 149 - 32.8 + Storning engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements' ****** Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 £21,650 4/1618 215/6000 206/3000 1315kg 166 7.0 - 131 165 39.2 + Quirky character and bold styling 'enhancements' ****** *****************************															
Mini Jonn Cooper Works (F56) 196 D £18,665 4/1998 189/4700 206/1250 1160 kg 166 6.8 - 146 133 49.6 + Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays ************************************															
Mini John Cooper Works (F56) 211R £23,050 4/1998 228/5200 236/1250 1200kg 193 6.3 - 153 155 42.2 + Fast, agile, super-nimble - OE tyres lack outright grip ************************************															
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58) 164 R £23,805 4/1598 208/6000 206/2000 1175kg 180 6.3 - 149 165 39.8 + The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable 'helmet' roof *********************************															
Mini Cooper (R56) 185 F '09-'14 4/1598 120/6000 118/4250 1075 kg 113 9.1 - 126 127 52.3 + Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S' ************************************															
Mini Cooper S (R56) 149 R															
Mini Cooper SD (R56) 158 D 711-74 4/1995 141/4000 225/1750 1150kg 125 8.0 - 134 114 65.7 + A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative ★★★★★ Mini John Cooper Works (R56) 184 R '08-74 4/1598 205/6000 206/2000 1160kg 182 7.2 16.7 148 165 39.8 + A seriously rapid Mini- Cocasionally just a little unruly ★★★★★ Mini Cooper S (R50) 077 R '02-'06 4/1598 168/6000 155/4000 1140kg 143 7.8 19.9 135 - 33.6 + Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★ Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50) 144 R '06 4/1598 215/700 184/600 1090kg 20 6.5 - 149 - 32.8 + Stroming engine, agility - Tacky styling enhancements' ★★★★★ Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £21,650 4/1618 215/6000 206/3600 1315kg 166 7.0 - 137 165 3															
Mini John Cooper Works (R56) 184 R '08-14 4/1598 208/6000 206/2000 1160kg 182 R 12.2 16.7 148 R 165 R 39.8 + A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly ******** Mini John Cooper Works (P(R56) 195 R '13-14 4/1598 215/6000 206/2000 1160kg 188 R 6.3 - 150 I65 39.8 + Bazzenly typeractive - Too much for some roads and some tastes ******** Mini Cooper S Works (P(50) 077 R '02-'06 4/1598 168/6000 155/4000 1160kg 188 R 6.3 - 150 I65 39.8 + Bazzenly typeractive - Too much for some roads and some tastes ******** Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50) 147 R 10 R 140 R 143 R 19.9 135 - 33.6 + Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ********* Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £21,650 4/1618 215/6000 206/3600 1315kg 166 7.0 - 137 165 39.2 + Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch ***********************															
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56) 195 R '13-14 4/1598 215/6000 206/2000 1160 kg 188 6.3 - 150 165 39.8 + Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes ★★★★★ Mini Cooper S (R50) 077 R '02-'06 4/1598 125/700 184/600 1990 kg 135 - 3.3 + Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★ Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50) 144 R '06 4/1598 215/700 184/4600 190 kg 200 6.5 - 149 - 32.8 + Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements' ★★★★★ Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £216,50 4/168 215/6000 206/3600 1315kg 166 7.0 - 137 165 32.8 + Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements' ★★★★★															
Mini Cooper S (R50) 077 k '02-'06 4/1598 l68/6000 155/4000 1140kg 143 rs 19.9 l35 rs 135 rs 23.6 strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★ Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50) 144 k '06 d/1598 l215/7100 184/4600 1090kg l20 d.55 - 149 rs - 32.8 stromg performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★ Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £21,650 4/1618 l215/6000 206/3600 1315kg l66 rs 7.0 rs 137 l65 l53 l22 strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★															
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50) 144 R '06 4/1598 215/7100 184/4600 1090kg 200 6.5 - 149 - 32.8 + Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements' ★★★★ Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £21,650 4/1618 215/6000 206/3600 1315kg 166 7.0 - 137 165 39.2 + Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch ★★★★☆															
Nissan Juke Nismo RS 208 D £21,650 4/1618 215/6000 206/3600 1315kg 166 7.0 - 137 165 39.2 + Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch												-			
												16.5			
	NISSAN JUKE NISMO KS Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	208 D	£21,650 '97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	121	COI	34.0		****





★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice

Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy. This generation of Mégane has got better and better with every update, and the 275 is simply sublime. Optional Öhlins dampers and Cup 2 rubber (taken from the Trophy-R) aren't essential, but improve things even further.



Best of the Rest

The Golf R provides a more grown-up but still hugely entertaining alternative to the Mégane, while its relative, the SEAT Leon Cupra 280, is a real buzz, especially with the Sub8 pack (left) and sticky tyres. The Fiesta ST Mountune is our pick of the smaller hatches.

Superminis / Hot Hatches

	Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
	Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	'94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6		118		35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun- Needs caning to extract full potential	****
	Peugeot 106 GTI 16v	034 R	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	22.2	127	-	34.9	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	****
	Peugeot 208 GTi	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	****
	Peugeot 208 GTi 30th Anniversary	211 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused small hatch on sale - Nearly £4k more than a Fiesta ST Mountune	****
	Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 R	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	****
	Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	+ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	****
	Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	+ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh- Limited choice of colours	****
	Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	+ Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	****
	Renaultsport Clio 200 Auto	184 R	£18,995	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy nat-asp engine and manual 'box	*****
0	Renaultsport Clio 220 Trophy	213 R	£21,780	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	146	135	47.9	+ Improves on the 200 Auto - Still not a match for previous-generation Renaultsport Clios	****
10	Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.5	+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make it anymore	****
	Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	****
	Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139	-	34.9	+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****
	Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery	****
	Renaultsport Clio Trophy	200 R	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels- Just 500 were built	****
	Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch- Nervous in the wet, no ABS	****
	Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****
	Renaultsport Clio V6	029 R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335kg	173	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky	****
	Renault Clio Williams	195 R	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.6	20.8	134	-	26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****
	Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	120	-	28.4	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left	****
	Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 R	£28,930	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	159	174	37.7	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	****
	Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	203 R	£36,430	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey	****
	Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	12-15	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	174	37.7	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned	****
	Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	+ Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	****
	Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5	+ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power	****
	Renaultsport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	+ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	****
	Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	200 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147	-	-	+ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	****
	SEAT Ibiza FR 2.0 TDI	144 R	£17,445	4/1968	141/4200	236/1750	1245kg	115	8.2	-	131	123	60.1	+ More fun than the petrol FR, manual gearbox option - The Cupra's not much more	****
	SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	£18.765	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	142	139	47.9	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement	***
	SEAT Leon FR TDI 184	184 D	£22,255	4/1968	181/4000	280/1750	1350kg	136	7.5		142	112	64.2	+ Performance, sweet chassis, economy, comfort - Boorish engine	***
	SEAT Leon Cupra 280	212 R	£27,210	4/1984	276/5600	258/1750	1300kg	216	5.8	-	155	149	44.1	+ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	****
	SEAT Leon FR+	163 D	71-72	4/1984	208/5300	206/1700	1334kg	158	7.2	-	145	170	38.7	+ As quick as a Golf GTI five-door but lots cheaper - Misses the VW's completeness	****
	SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	10-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	34.9	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches	****
	SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	-	153	190	34.0	+ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have adjustability of old Cupra R	****
	SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	****
	Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	£17,150	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	+ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering	****
	Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 R	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	127	-	55.4	+ Fascinatingly fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	****
	Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£23,260	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1350kg	163	6.8	-	154	142	45.6	+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	****
	Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'06-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	+ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calipers?	****
	Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	'08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	130	270	51.1	+ An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted	***
	Subaru Impreza KTI 330S	124 R	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	2/0	-	+ A bit quicker than the STIbut not better	****
	Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,749	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7		121	147	44.1	+ The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability	****
	Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 R	'05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1043kg	121	8.9		124	165	39.8	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	****
	Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 R	£17.995	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.5	-	143	174	37.7	+ Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack	***
	Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals	****
	Vauxhall Corsa VXR N'ring/Clubsport	164 R	71-13/14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5		143	178	30.7	+ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	****
	Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27.315	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	184	34.9	+ Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	
	Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R	'05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7		****
	VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£7990+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000		70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	****
							854kg	150			146	139		+ Accomplished city car is dynamically soundbut predictably slow	****
	VW Polo GTI	211 R	£18,850	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1280kg		6.7	-			47.1	+ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging	***
	VW Polo GTI	154 R	70-74	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	+ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	***
	VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£25,765	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1377kg	134	7.5		143	109	67.3	+ Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI	***
	VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	207 R	£26,580	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1351kg	163	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Brilliantly resolved - Mégane 265 beats it as a pure drivers' car	****
	VW Golf GTE (Mk7)	202 D	£28,000	4/1395	201	258	1524kg	134	7.6	-	138	35	188.0	+ The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid at this price - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun	****
	VW Golf R (Mk7)	212 R	£29,900	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1476kg	204	5.1	-	155	165	40.9	+ A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 just edges it as a pure drivers' car	****
	VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	****
	VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	70-73	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, ACC only optional	****
	VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	+ Character and ability: the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
	VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	****
	VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 R	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
	VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	129	-	26.6	+ Still feels everyday useable - Very hard to find a standard one	****
	VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	095 R	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500 236/1500	840kg	135 165	8.1	-	112	203	36.0	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one + Good-looking, desirable Volvo - Lacks edge of best hatches. Avoid auto	****
	Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122 R	'08-'12	5/2521	227/5000		1347kg		6.6	16.9	149		32.5		***

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Our Choice
BMW M5. The turbocharging of BMW's M-cars met with scepticism, but the current M5's 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 feels a perfect fit. It's a brutally fast car, and there are clever (and useable) adjustable driving modes. The '30 Jahre' special edition, which has an extra 40bhp, is especially worth a look.



Best of the Rest
Mercedes' E63 AMG offers intoxicating performance, especially
with the Supgrade (pictured). BMW's M3 is an appealing allround package, but its C63 AMG rival has more approachable limits. If you must have an SUV, take a look at BMW's X6 M or Porsche's Macan Turbo or Cayenne GTS.

Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£46,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ 173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	****
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1610kg	255	4.2		190	177	37.2	+ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	****
Alpina D3 (E90)	120 R	'08-'12	4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52.3	+ Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	****
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	£75,150	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	1920kg	282	4.5	-	198	244	26.9	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	***
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	£98,800	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	2040kg	265	4.6	-	194	230	28.5	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	****
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	****
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	****
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£33,540	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	****
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	£39,610	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1685kg	198	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Great powertrain, secure chassis - The RS4	****
Audi S4 (B7)	073 D	'05-'08	8/4163	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4	-	155	-	-	+ Effortless V8, agile handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	192 R	£56,545	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Harsh ride, unnatural steering	****
Audi RS4 (B7)	088 R	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	****
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	+ Effortless pace- Not the last word in agility. Bends wheel rims	****
Audi RS2	101 R	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	****
Audi S6	091D	'06-'11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£77,995	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	229	28.8	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	****
Audi RS7	208 R	£84,480	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	+ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience	***
Audi S7	171 D	£63,375	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	+ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	***
Audi S8	164 D	£80,690	8/3993	513/5800	479/1700	1975kg	264	4.1	-	155	237	27.7	+ Quicker and much more economical than before - But still underwhelming to drive	****
Audi RS Q3	206 D	£45,495	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	+ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity	****
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£142,800	8/3997	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	****
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£153,300	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3		200	343	19.0	+ More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull	****
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	****
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	210 D	£252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8		190	342	19.3	+ Characterful; superb build quality - A bit pricey	****
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	£29,475	4/1995	181/4000	280/1750	1495kg	123	7.4		146	120	61.4	+ Fleet-friendly new Three is economical yet entertaining - It's a tad noisy	****
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	£30,470	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	5.8		155	149	44.8	+ New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the six-cylinder soundtrack	****
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£36,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6		155	129	57.6	+ Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel	****
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	£41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	_	155	174	34.9	+ Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weighs and costs less	****
BMW M3 (F80)	211 R	£56,590	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character	
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	'08-'11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7		290	22.8	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	****
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	71-72	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	****
BMW 528i (F10)	164 D	£36,570	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1710kg	144	6.2	-	155	152	41.5	+ Four-pot 528 is downsizing near its best - You'll miss the straight-six sound effects	****
BMW 535i (F10)	141 D	£44,560	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1685kg	182	6.1	-	155	185	34.9	+ New 5-series impresses But only with all the chassis options ticked	****
BMW M5 (FIOM)	208 R	£73,960	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3		155	232	28.5	+ Twin-turbocharging suits all-new M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	****
BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	****
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5		-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	****
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	'92-'96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6		-	-	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	****
BMW M5 (E28)	182 R	'86-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200	6.2	-	151	-	-	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks	****
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£98.145	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included	****
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£64,525	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	****
BMW X6 M	212 D	£93,080	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	+ Big improvement on its predecessor - Coupe roofline still of questionable taste	****
BMW X6 M	134 D	'09-'15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	***
BMW 750i	174 D	£71,575	8/4395	449/5500	480/2000	2020kg	226	4.7	-	155	199	20.5	+ Well specced, impressively refined - Lags far behind the Mercedes S-class	****
Brabus Bullit	119 R	c£330.000		720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8		217	-		+ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	****
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	****
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4	140 R	'90-'93	4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305kg	159	6.6	-	144	303	24.4	+ Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one	****
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth	141 K	'86-'90	4/1993	204/6000	204/4500	1220kg	169	6.2	-	143		24.4		****
	012 R	'98-'03	4/1993	204/0000	158/6700			6.1	17.4		-	29.4	+ Road-going Group A racecar - Don't shout about the power output!	****
Honda Accord Type R						1306kg	163		17.4				+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	***
Jaguar XES	213 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1590kg	214	4.9	-	155 155	194	34.9 47.1	+ Great chassis; neat design - V6 loses appeal in the real world	****
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Diesel S	145 D	£46,615	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	162	5.9			159		+ Sweet handling plus diesel economy - But we'd still have the R	****
Jaguar XFR	181 D	£65,440	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2		270	24.4	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	****
Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	£79,995	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+ XF gets turned up to 12 - Starting to feel its age	****
Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake	203 R	£82,495	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1892kg	291	4.6	-	186	297	22.2	+ Looks fantastic, huge performance, nice balance - Not as sharp as the saloon	****
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£56,870	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1700kg	162	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR	****
Jaguar XJR	191 D	£92,395	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1805kg	302	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	****
Jaguar XJR	054 R	'03-'09	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1665kg	244	5.0	-	155	-	23.0	+ Genuine 7-series rival - 2007 facelift didn't help middle-aged image	***















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Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32.395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	_	117	159	46.3	+ Style, packaging, refinement - Will need to prove Sport tag in UK	****
Lexus IS F	151 R	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too	***
Lotus Carlton	170 R	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8	10.6	176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	***
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£52,615	6/2979	325/5000	406/1750	1810kg	182	5.6	-	163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	***
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	£63,760	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	***
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	£80,115	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	***
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	179 D	£108,185	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	190	274	23.9	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	***
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	174	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	***
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 R	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	18.0	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	***
Maserati Quattroporte	085 R	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	***
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	113 D	'07-'08	8/4244	396/7000	339/4250	1930kg	208	5.5	-	167	-	- 2//	+ Best Quattroporte chassis so far - More power wouldn't go amiss	***
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA 45 AMG	185 F 186 D	'89-'92 £42.270	4/2498 4/1991	201/6750 355/6000	177/5500 332/2250	1360kg 1510kg	147 239	7.2 4.6	-	<i>142</i> 155	161	24.4 31.0	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	***
Mercedes-Benz GLA 45 AMG	205 R	£44,595	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback + An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	***
Mercedes-AMG C63	209 D	£59,800	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	155	192	34.5	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	***
Mercedes-AMG C63 S	211 R	£66,545	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	155	192	34.5	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	***
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better	***
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	***
Mercedes-AMG E63	187 D	£74,115	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	***
Mercedes-AMG E63 S	208 R	£84,710	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	229	28.8	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Dim-witted auto 'box	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	165 R	71-73	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Turbo engine doesn't dilute E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	134 D	'09-'11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	+ As below, but with an extra 11bhp and squarer headlights - Steering still vague	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	155	-	19.8	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	***
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	***
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,835	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4	-	155	237	27.9	+ Monster pace - Average steering feel	***
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG	148 D	70-73	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2040kg	267	4.5	-	155	244	26.9	+ Massive torque, massively reduced emissions - Massive car	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS 63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	231	28.5	+ Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS 63 AMG	178 R	711-714	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS 63 AMG	099 R	'06-'11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	***
Mercedes-Benz GLE 63 AMG S Coupe	213 D	£96,555	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	155	278	23.7	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	***
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R	£87,005	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350	****
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	12.0	130	322	26.2	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R 122 D	'08-'13 '08-'13	4/1998 4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2 4.1	13.9	155 155	256 328	26.2 19.9	+ Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360 Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-'12	4/1998	354/6500 324/6500	363/3500 322/3500	1560kg 1590kg	231 207	4.1	-	155	256	19.9	+ Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?! + Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FO-400	181 R	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8		155	328		+ Most powerful factory Evo ever about X grand too much when new	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 R	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 R	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	3.9	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	***
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 R	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	***
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	***
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031R	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	***
Mitsubishi Evo VII RS Sprint	041 D	'02-'03	4/1997	320/6500	327/6200	1260kg	258	4.4	-	150	-	-	+ Ruthlessly focused road weapon - For the truly committed	***
Mitsubishi Evo VI Mäkinen Edition	200 R	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	***
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£86,080	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8	-	177	208	31.7	+ Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses characterful V8 of old 'S'	***
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	£93,391	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbo'd rivals	***
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£108,006	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	270	24.6	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	***
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	711-713	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	***
Porsche Macan S	205 R	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	+ No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	***
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.5	11.1	165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Still not a match for a proper sports saloon	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	£72,523	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	163	228	28.3	+ The driver's Cayennebut why would a driver want an SUV?	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	£93,574	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine	***
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D 160 D	£118,455 £46,660	8/4806 4/1999	562/6000 237/6000	590/2500 251/1900	2235kg 1670kg	255 144	4.1 7.0	-	176 135	267 199	24.6	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	****
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4 Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£84,350	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	155	298	21.7	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only + Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	****
Range Rover Sport SVR	212 D	£95,150	8/5000	542/6000	501/3500	2335kg	236	4.5	-	162	298	21.7	+ Characterful drivetrain; genuine off-road ability - Not a match for its rivals on the road	****
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	£80,850	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2350kg	144	6.5	-	140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	***
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	£216,864	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	***
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£310,200	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	***
Subaru WRX STI	201 R	£28,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	158	242	27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	***
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	70-'13	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	***
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	'07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2	-	143	-	-	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	***
Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	***
Subaru Impreza STI Spec C *	084 D	'05-'07	4/1994	320/6730	311/3500	1350kg	240	4.3	-	157	-	-	+ Lighter, faster, fiercer - The need for self-restraint	***
Subaru Impreza RB320	105 R	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	***
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073 R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	***
Subaru STi Type RA Spec C*	067R	'03-'05	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	1380kg	247	4.3		160	-	-	+ Best Impreza since the P1- Lost its throbby flat-four voice	***
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4		144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	***
Subaru Impreza P1	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9		150	-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-shape Impreza - Prices reflect this	***
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0	14.1		-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	***
Subaru Impreza 22B	188 R	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0	13.1		-	-	+ The ultimate Impreza - Doesn't come cheap	***
Tesla Model S P85D	208 D	£79,080	515kW	691	687	2239kg	314	3.2	-	155	0	n/a	+ Dual motors and 4WD equals extraordinary acceleration - Lack of charging points	***
Tesla Model S Performance	196 R	74	310kW	416	442	2100kg	201	4.2	-	130	0	n/a	+ Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations	***
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	£29,824	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	170	249	26.6	+ A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	***
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	-	27.4	+ Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	***
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	208 R	£54,499	8/6162	576/6150	545/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	155	363	18.5	+ Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	***
Volvo V60 Polestar	197 D	£49,775	6/2953	345/5250	369/3000	1759kg	199	5.0	-	155	237	27.7	+ First Volvo to get a full Polestar makeover - Still a close relative of the standard V60	***



Noble *M12 GTO/M400*

Years 2000-2007 Engine V6, 2544cc, twin-turbo Power 310bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 320lb ft @ 3500rpm 0-60mph 4.1sec Top speed 165mph (spec is for M12 GTO)



WHY WOULD YOU?

They may have been a bit rough around the edges, but these Lee Noble-era Nobles had real balls and real ability. They are mid-engined British sports cars with the performance and handling to stand toe-to-toe with a Porsche GT3.

WHAT TO PAY

£20k-25k for an original M12 GTO and £40k-plus for the top spec M400 (2968cc and 425bhp).

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Rubber parts can be stressed by excess heat, so check all hoses and bushes are crack-free and pilable. The top balljoint bushes wear out quite quickly and should be inspected at every service. Check the chassis for bent tubes that suggest accident damage. Damp carpets could be water getting in through a joint at the edge of the floor – a 12-hour job to re-seal. (Full guide, **evo** 209.)





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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice

Porsche Boxster Spyder. The Boxster is the benchmark in its class for a good reason: it's simply a fabulous all-rounder. The new Spyder, which gets the 3.8-litre engine from the 911 Carrera S, would be our pick, but the 3.4-litre GTS and S, and even the basic 2.7, are all true five-star cars, too.



Best of the Rest

Lotus's Exige S'Roadster counters the Boxster with a more focused driving experience, while the more-affordable Elise continues to defy its age. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both V6 (left) and V8 forms, but for the ultimate thrills, get a Caterham 620R, Ariel Atom or Radical.

Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	211 D	£59,500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg	256	4.5	-	160	161	40.9	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe - Still has the coupe's other foibles	***
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
Alpina D4 Biturbo Convertible	212 D	£54,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1815kg	193	5.0	-	171	156	47.9	+ As much torque as a 997 Turbo - A diesel convertible wouldn't be our choice of Alpina	****
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155	-	-	+ As mad as ever - Rain	***
Ariel Atom 3.5R	198 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	***
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	'08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+ The Atom just got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	'09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	+ It's brilliant - It's mental	****
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	'12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten were made	***
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	10-12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom	***
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33.000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	***
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age	***
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	***
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating gearbox	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	12-14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	15.2	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	***
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£141,995	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.4		190	368	18.2	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	***
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	'09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286		-	191	388	17.3	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	
								4.3	-					***
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	£41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2		155	169	38.7	+ A serious proposition, ranking close behind a Boxster S - Coupe still looks better	***
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question	***
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	+ Terrific engine is the best thing about it	***
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£46,770	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6	-	155	199	33.2	+ Gets the S4's trick supercharged engine - Bordering on dull	***
Audi RS5 Cabriolet	179 D	£69,505	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1920kg	235	4.9	-	155	249	26.4	+ Pace, looks, interior, naturally aspirated V8 - Not the last word in fun or involvement	***
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate	***
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	'11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	***
BAC Mono	189 R	£124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers	***
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	+ One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car	***
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	+ A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy; feels like it could give more	***
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	+ Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side	***
Bentley Continental Supersports	147 D	'10-'12	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	3.9	-	202	388	17.3	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	****
BMW M235i Convertible	207 D	£37,710	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1600kg	204	5.2	-	155	199	33.2	+ Neat styling; great drivetrain - Loss of dynamic ability compared with coupe	***
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	***
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155		32.9	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like	***
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	***
BMW M Roadster	002 R	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155		25.4	+ Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	***
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	£45,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe	***
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	£61,145	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	+ As good as fast four-seat drop-tops getbut still not as good as a coupe or saloon	***
									-					
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	119 D	'08-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1810kg	232	5.3	-	155	297	22.2	+ M DCT transmission, pace, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge	***
BMW M3 Convertible (E46)	035 D	'01-'06	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	207	5.3	-	155	-	23.3	+ That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads	***
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	***
Caterham Seven 160	198 R	£19,330	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.5	-	100	-	-	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	****
Caterham Seven 270	209 R	£22,995	4/1595	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0	-	122	-	-	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	***
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	£26,995	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	***
Caterham Seven 420	209 R	£29,995	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg	381	3.8	-	136	-	-	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	***
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£49,995	4/1999	311/7700	219/7350	545kg	580	2.8	-	155	-	-	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	***
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	£46,495	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	***
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	'07-'14	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	+ Great debut for new Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	***
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 R	71-'14	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	73-74	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 R	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	***
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-		+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	***
Caterham Levante	131 R	'09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	+ Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly	***
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	0.2	130	-	-	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	***
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600						146	-			***
					155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8			-	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	
Donkervoort D8 GTO Performance	185 R	£120,000	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	695kg	548	2.8	-	168	-		+ There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine	***
Ferrari California T	212 D	£154,460	8/3855	552/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily useability above outright thrills	****
Ferrari California	171 D	'08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1735kg	283	3.8	-	193	299	-	+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider	***
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	****
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£56,745	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S	***
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£65,745	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper	****
Jaguar F-type R Convertible		£92,295	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Pace, characterful V8 - Costs £25k more than the S	***
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 R	£135,000	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186	-	-	+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	***
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	73-74	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	+ Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some	***
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fantastic 5-litre V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes	***
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	711-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Loud and mad; most exciting Jag in years - It was also the most expensive in years	***
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95.880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	***
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	£87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	***
KTM X-Bow K	138 R	'08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137			+ Mad looks; real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than you'd hope	***
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PAST master

Lamborghini Diablo GT Issue 014, December 1999

Lighter and more powerful than the Diablo SV, the GT was once the world's fastest production car Measured in pure performance terms, the wildest Diablo certainly delivers the goods: 0-60mph in about 3.7 seconds and a top speed of 21Imph. Carbon composite bodywork surounds the GT's tubular steel frame and peels 70kg from the aluminium-bodied SV's kerb weight, helping the GT accelerate, change direction and stop noticeably better.

'The sheer power makes it easy to break traction in turns. Holding a powerslide at low speeds is not difficult, but it is not recommended at high speed. Overtaking slower cars, meanwhile, is like taking part in a computer game. For the committed acceleration junkie, the GT is a 575bhp fix. Make no mistake, this devil of a car has one heck of a soul.'





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Ratings

Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	ndm09-0	0-100mph	Max mph	C02 g/km	ЕС трд	evo rating	
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - A touch pricey for a stripped-out Elise	****
Lotus Elise S	172 R	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ New supercharged Elise boasts epic grip and pace -£37K before (pricey) options	****
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	****
Lotus Elise S Cup	207 D	£43,500	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	932kg	237	4.2	-	140	175	37.5	+ Rewards precision like no other Elise - You can't remove the roof	****
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	£55,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - Boxster S is a better all-rounder	****
Lotus Elise R	068 R	'04-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrillsome Elise yet - Blaring engine note	****
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	'08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	****
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 R	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
Lotus Elise 111S	049R	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	****
Lotus Elise Sport 135 Lotus Elise Sport 190	040 D 044 R	'03	4/1796 4/1796	135/6200 190/7800	129/4850 128/5000	726kg 710kg	189 272	5.4 4.7	12.1	129 135	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel + Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	****
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126		39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	****
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	10.3	150	-	J9.4 -	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	****
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	'09-'11	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof	****
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	'07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3		140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal	****
Lotus 340R	126 R	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racerthat looks like a dune buggy from Mars	****
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolving	****
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	****
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£104,535	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	****
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,370	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	****
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4)	212 R	£22,695	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1047kg	153	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	****
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 R	'09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	138	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less than macho image	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 R	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	****
Mazda MX-51.8i (Mk2)	017 R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	****
Mazda MX-51.6 (Mk1)	131 R	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 350 Sport	161 R	£44,605	6/3498	302/6500	273/3500	1465kg	209	5.5	-	155	167	39.8	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	£55,345	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	087 R	'05-'10	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG Black Series	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	****
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	£81,915	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	£112,510	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	£170,815	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	'08-'13	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	****
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	'02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	-	-	+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	72-714	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	****
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£25,950	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	****
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£71,140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Getsunsettled by big bumps	****
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	****
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128,045	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ As above, with a V8 and targa top - It's proper supercar money	****
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	****
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	'10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	****
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	£38,810	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes and looks better; cleanest Boxster ever - Steering now electric to help cut CO2	****
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	£47,035	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	£52,879	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981) Porsche Boxster (987)	213 D	£60,459 '05-'12	6/3800 6/2893	370/6700 252/6400	310/4750 214/4400	1315kg 1335kg	286 192	4.5 5.9	-	180 163	230 221	28.5 30.0	+ The fastest, most rewarding Boxster yet - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's + Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	****
	161 R	'05-12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500		229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7		,,,,,,,,,,
Porsche Boxster S (987) Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	10-12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1355kg 1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	223	29.1	+ As above, but with more power - Lighter steering than before + Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	****
Porsche Boxster (986 2.7)	049 R	10-12	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	221	29.1	+ Still an impeccable sports car - Very little	****
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above	****
Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet (991)	183 R	£82.169	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1470kg	238	5.0		177	216	30.7	+ Brilliant engine - Doesn't quite have the 'magic at any speed' character of previous 911s	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet (991)	171 R	£92,204	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1485kg	270	4.7		187	228	29.1	+ All-new open 911 drives just like the coupe - Which means the same artificial steering	****
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet (997)	139 D	'07-'12	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg	305	3.8	-	194	275	24.1	+ Absurdly quick and capable drop-top - We'd still take the coupe	****
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet (996)	060 R	'03-'05	6/3596	414/6000	413/4600	1700kg	250	4.7	-	185	-	24.1	+ Faster than you'll ever need it to be - Just the image thing again	****
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£81,300	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	795kg	383	3.0		161	-		+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	****
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	£143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustability, track ability - Compromised for road use	****
Renault Sport Spider	183 R	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-		+ Rarity, fabulous unassisted steering feel - Heavier than you'd hope	****
Toyota MR2	187 R	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	_	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	****
TVR Tamora	070 R	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5		160	_	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	****
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	'05-'07	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1	195+	-	-	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really?	****
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007R	'93-'03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	_	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	'93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
	023 R	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	****
Vauxhall VX220														
Vauxhall VX220 Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	025 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****



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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice Porsche 911 GT3 RS. With Porsche's Motorsport department seemingly infallible at present, an evolution of the 991-generation $\mbox{GT3}$ could only be something really, really special. And it is. A shoo-in for the eCoty trophy in 2015, then? Don't be too sure we're lining up some very strong competition for it.



Best of the RestMercedes' AMG GT S (left) is deeply satisfying on every level – we prefer it to the Porsche 911 Turbo and Nissan GT-R. Meanwhile, Aston's V8 Vantage N430 and V12 Vantage S are incredibly entertaining, the Cayman GT4 is as good as the hype suggests, and Jaguar's F-type R Coupe is a hoot.

Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Мах трһ	C02g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Alfa Romeo 4C	209 R	£51.500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5	Ū	160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	***
Alfa Romeo &C Competizione	120 R	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	***
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50.950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hope	e ****
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	
Alpina B3 Biturbo (E92)	108 R	'07-'13	6/2979	355/5500	369/3800	1570kg	230	4.8	-	177	-	29.1	+ Alpina's M3 alternative - Too refined for some	****
Alpina B3 GT3 (E92)	176 D	'12-'13	6/2979	402/6000	398/4500	1535kg	266	4.4	-	186	224	-	+ Alpina's M3 GTS alternative - Auto gearbox frustrates when pressing on	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	***
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	210 R	£89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5	+ Malleable, involving, can still hold its own - Never feels rampantly quick	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	***
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	190 R	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7	-	205	343	19.2	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box	***
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	***
Aston Martin V12 Zagato	181 F	713	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.2	-	190	388	17.3	+ The looks, the noise, the way it drives - It's several times the price of a V12 Vantage	***
Aston Martin DB9	178 R	£133,495	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ Better than the old DB9 in every respect - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	***
Aston Martin DBS	142 R	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	***
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	***
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£32,860	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	***
Audi TTS (Mk3)	209 R	£38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ The most dynamically interesting TT yet - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	***
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk2)	155 R	'06-'14	4/1984	208/4300	258/1600	1295kg	163	6.3	15.7	152	154	42.8	+ Front-driver loses nothing to quattro TTs - Steers like a computer game	***
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 R	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	155	184	35.8	+ Usefully quicker TT; great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	****
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	****
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	72-74	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	***
Audi TT Sport (Mk1)	081 D	'05-'06	4/1781	237/5700	236/2300	1390kg	173	5.9	-	155	-	30.3	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	***
Audi S5	189 D	£43,665	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster - Poor body control	***
Audi RS5	206 R	£59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	
Audi R8 V8	201 R	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	***
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	***
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£149,800	8/3933	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better drivers' Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	***
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	£150,500	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.3	-	197	338	19.5	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	***
Bentley Continental GT Speed	212 D	£168,300	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - We'd still have the V8	***
Bentley Continental GT Speed	205 D	'15	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ The W12 Bentley for keen drivers - Ageing styling	***
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	£237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	***
BMW 1-series M Coupe	188 R	'11-'12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	****
BMW M235i Coupe	209 R	£34,535	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0	-	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	***
BMW 435i M Sport Coupe	189 D	£42,365	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1510kg	203	5.4	-	155	169	35.8	+ Better balance than 3-series saloon - Can feel characterless at lower speeds	****
BMW M4	206 R	£57,050	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1497kg	288	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	****
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	'07-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its rivalsexcept the cheaper 1-series M	****
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	171 R	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	193	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	****
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever - Slightly artificial steering feel	****
BMW M3 CS (E46)	088 R	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.0	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	****
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R 148 R	'03-'04 '93-'98	6/3246	355/7900 321/7400	273/4900 258/3250	1385kg	260	5.3 5.4	12.0 12.8	155 157	-	25.7	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are a bit sluggish	***
BMW M3 (E36)	148 R 165 R	'86-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1460kg 1165kg	223		17.8	147	-	25.7 20.3	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	***
BMW M3 (E30)	097R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900		185	6.7 5.0	17.8	155	-	23.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only	***
BMW Z4 M Coupe						1420kg	242		-		-		+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	***
BMW M Coupe	005 R	'98-'03	6/3246	325/7400	258/3250	1375kg	240	5.1	-	155		25.0	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	***
BMW 640d	165 D	£62,295	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1790kg	175	5.5	-	155	144	51.4	+ Great engine and economy, excellent build - Numb steering, unsettled B-road ride	***
BMW M6 (Mk2)	211 D	£92,350 '05-'10	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	10.0	155	232 342	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too	***
BMW M6 (Mk1)	106 R		10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	<i>342</i> 49	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	***
BMW i8	210 R	£99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155		134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	****
Chevrolet Camaro *	148 R 197 R	c£36,000 £69,810	8/6162 8/6162	426/5900	420/4600	1769kg	245	5.1	-	155 180	329 279	20.0	+ Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode; now import only	***
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z51 (C7)				460/6000	465/4600	1539kg	304	4.4	9.4			23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	***
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7) *	206 R	c£88,000	8/6156	650/6400	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.2	-	186	-	-	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	***
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	211 D	£33,995	8/4951	415/6500	391/4250	1720kg	245	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Looks, noise, performance, value, right-hand drive - Image not for everyone	***
Ford Shelby GT500 *	178 R	12-15	8/5812	662/6500	631/4000	1747kg	385	3.5	-	202	-	-	+ Huge performance for the money - Putting it to use takes nerve	***
Ginetta G40R	165 R	£35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-	+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy	***
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	***
Honda NSX	188 R	'90-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5		168	-	22.8	+ 'The useable supercar' - 270bhp sounds a bit weedy today	***
Honda NSX-R *	051R	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	157	/0.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Honda never brought it to the UK	***
Hyundai Veloster Turbo	176 D	'11-'15 CE1 260	4/1591	184/5500	195/1500	1313kg	142	8.2	-	133	157	40.9	+ The usual Hyundai value, with added fun - Styling might be too quirky for some	***
Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	***
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	211 D	£60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	***
Jaguar F-type R Coupe	203 R	£85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	***
Jaguar XK	130 D	'07-'14	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1585kg	244	5.2		155	264	25.2	+ Fine car for the likes of us - Jag buyers may not like the harder edge	***
Jaguar XKR	168 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	***
Jaguar XKR-S	168 R	71-74	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	***
Jaguar XKR-S GT	193 R	'14 £59.995	8/5000 8/4969	542/6000 470/6400	502/2500 391/4800	1638kg 1765kg	336	3.9 4.5	-	186	292	23.0	+ The most exciting XKR ever - Very limited numbers	***
Lexus RC F	206 R						271	4.5	-	168	-	-	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	***

POCKET buying guide

Renaultsport Mégane

Years 2004-2009 Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo Power 227bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 229lb ft @ 3000rpm 0-60mph 6.2sec Top speed 147mph (spec is for 230 F1 Team R26)



WHY WOULD YOU?

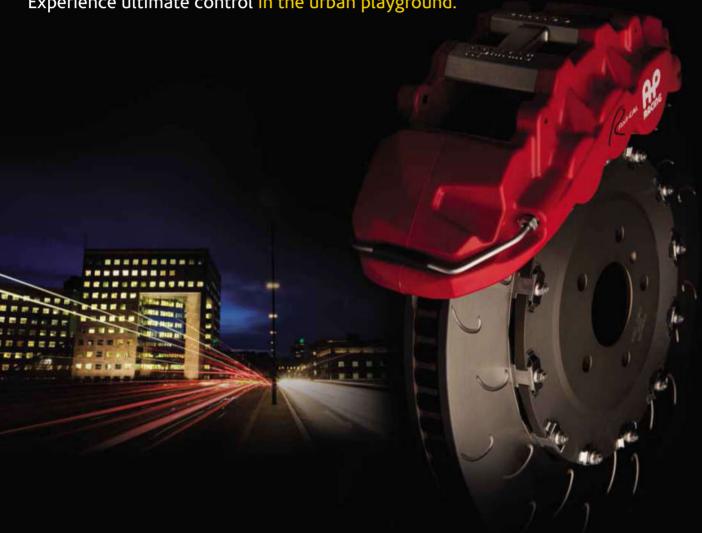
Because after a lukewarm start, the original Mégane RS developed into one of the hottest and most rewarding - of hatches.

WHAT TO PAY

Regular 225s (221bhp) start at £3k, but we'd pay the extra for a Trophy, Cup, 225 F1 Team or 230 F1 Team R26 (227bhp). The R26 starts at £5k, but the sought-after R26.R sits at around £20k.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

It's critical that the cambelt is changed at 72,000 $\,$ miles or five years, whichever is first, so ensure this has been done. A slight cough at idle could indicate blocked injectors. Front wheel hub bearings are prone to wear - listen for clonking noises or a reluctance for the steering to selfcentre. Check the condition of the keycard replacements are £180. (Full guide, evo 208.)





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Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	****
Lotus Exige (S2)	068 R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9	-	147	-	32.1	+ Highly focused road and track tool - Lacks visual impact of S1	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	****
Lotus Evora	138 R	£52,500	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricey options	****
Lotus Evora S	168 R	£63,950	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911	****
Lotus Evora 400	213 D	£72,000	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.1	-	186	225	29.1	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect; punchy pricing	****
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£82,890	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	****
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£91,420	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£110,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	****
Maserati Coupe	064 R	'03-'07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	4.8	-	177 180	-	17.6	+ Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering	****
Maserati GranSport Mazda RX-8	073 R 122 R	'04-'07 '03-'11	8/4244 2R/1308	400/7000 228/8200	333/4500 156/5500	1680kg 1429kg	239 162	4.8 6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	+ Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very little	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	711-714	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.4	186	280	23.5	+ Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output + A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	102 K	11-14	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.4	10.3	186	286	23.3	+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy, not as fiery as Black Series cars of old	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK 63 AMG	092 D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	-	155	-	19.9	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK 63 AMG Black Series		'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2		186	-	19.9	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party	****
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	£125,595	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT	****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	£183.075	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.2		186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	210 R	£110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Gorgeous to look at, fantastic chassis, huge grip - Downshifts could be quicker	****
Morgan AeroMax	120 R	'08-'09	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1	-	170	-	-	+ Weird and utterly wonderful - Only 100 were made	****
Nissan 370Z	204 R	£27,445	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not guite a Cayman-killer	****
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 R	£37,585	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	****
Nissan 350Z	107R	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling	****
Nissan GT-R (2012MY/2013MY/2014MY)	210 R	£78,020	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20K more than its launch price	****
Nissan GT-R Nismo	199 R	£125,000	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	152 R	'10-'12	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	3.0	-	194	279	23.5		****
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	125 R	'08-'10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8	-	193	-	-	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year, now from just £35K - You won't see 20mpg often	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196R	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 R	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Proof that Japanese hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Noble M12 GTO-3R	200 R	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170	-	-	+ The ability to humble exotica - Notchy gearchange can spoil the flow	****
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£27,150	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	42.1	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting	★★★★ ☆
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	£32,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****
Porsche Cayman (981)	209 R	£39,694	6/2706	271/7400	214/4500	1330kg	207	5.7	-	165	195	33.6	+ Very enticing for the money in basic spec - You might still want the power of the 'S'	****
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	£48,783	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	203 R	£55,397	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	208 R	£64,451	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	+ The Cayman we've been waiting for - Waiting lists	****
Porsche Cayman (987)	131 R	'11-'13	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8	-	165	221	30.1	+ Extra power, just as involving - Still lacks the desirability of other Porsches	****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132 R	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R 199 R	711-713 £73.509	6/3436 6/3436	325/7400 345/7400	273/4750 288/5600	1295kg	255 250	4.7	-	175 179	228 211	29.1 31.4	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	201 R	£83,545	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1400kg	283		9.5	188	223	29.7	+ 911 becomes cleaner and cleverer - But some of its character's gone AWOL	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991) Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991)	179 R	£88,400	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg 1465kg	273	4.3	9.5	185	233	28.5	+ As above, but with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility + More satisfying than RWD 991 Carreras - Choose your spec carefully	****
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991)	204 R	£91,098	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1425kg	302	4.4	-	190	223	29.7	+ The best RWD 991 Carrera - Optional active anti-roll bars rob feedback	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991)	204 R	£95,862	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	070 R	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	+ evo Car of the Year 2004; like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (996 3.4)	008 R	'98-'01	6/3387	296/6800	258/4600	1320kg	228	5.2	-	174	-	28.0	+ evo Car of the Year 1998; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (993)		'94-'97	6/3600	285/6100	251/5250	1372kg	211	5.2	-	168	-	25.0	+ More character than 996 - Harder work at speed	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	£100.540	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	23.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	213 R	£131,296	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.3	-	193	296	22.2	+ Sensationally good to drive - They won't all be painted Ultra Violet	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	'11-'12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	082 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - Limited supply	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£229,128	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	155	327	20.2	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Subaru BRZ	204 R	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	****
Toyota GT86	174 R	£22,995	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1275kg	157	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its cousin (above) - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	****
TVR Sagaris	097R	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	****
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	****
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 R	'98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	5.0	11.4	160+	120	- (71	+ Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion	****
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI VW Scirocco R	155 R	£26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	****
A MA ZURUCCU K	200 D	£32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	****



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Amber Transforming young lives









Our Choice
Ferrari 458 Speciale. The regular 458 Italia was amazing enough, but the Speciale follows in the tradition of the 360 Challenge Straddle and 430 Scuderia and makes the car it is based on even more, well, special. Our 2014 Car of the Year. It's equally brilliant in open-top 'Speciale A' form, too.



Best of the RestPorsche's 918 Spyder (left) pips the McLaren P1 on the road, and vice versa on track. The LaFerrari is an incredible drive, too. Maybe get all three.... Meanwhile, Pagani's Huayra was our joint 2012 Car of the Year and Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama, especially in SV form.

Supercars

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	C02 g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6		201	298	22.1	•	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	+ Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
Aston Martin One-77	179 R	'10-'12	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-	220+	-	-		****
Audi R8 V10 Plus	213 D	£134,500	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1555kg	393	3.2	-	205	287	23.0		****
Audi R8 V10	181 D	70-75	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0		****
Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	'13-'15	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0		****
Audi R8 GT	169 F	'10-'12	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-		****
Audi R8 LMX	208 R	'15	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9		****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	'05-'11	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4		****
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	'10-'14	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2		****
Bugatti EB110	078 R	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-		****
Caparo T1	138 R	£301,975	8/3499	575/10,500	310/9000	689kg	848	3.8	6.2	205	-	-		****
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 R	'09-'13	8/6162	638/6500	603/3800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	355	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain	***
errari 488 GTB	211 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/8000	560/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	205+	260	24.8		****
errari 458 Italia	183 R	'09-'15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	202	307	20.6	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	****
errari 458 Spider	185 R	£199,006	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1530kg	373	3.3	-	198	275	23.9		****
errari 458 Speciale	203 R	£208,100	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
errari 458 Speciale A	204 D	£228,682	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1445kg	420	3.0	-	199	275	21.2		***
Ferrari F430	163 R	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0		196	-	18.6		****
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	121 R	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198	-	15.7		****
Ferrari Scuderia Spider 16M	133 D	'09	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1440kg	355	3.7	-	196	360	18.0		***
errari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0		***
errari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	- 16.7	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud- It's very, very loud	***
errari F355 F1 Berlinetta	163 R	'97-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg	281	4.7	-	183	-	16.7	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	***
errari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	£241,053	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	- 7/	211	350	18.8		***
errari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 R	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8		***
errari 599 GTO	161 R	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	- 12.2		****
errari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-		+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	***
errari 550 Maranello	169 R	'97-'02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3		***
errari FF	194 R	£238,697	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4		***
errari 612 Scaglietti F1	090 R	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	***
errari LaFerrari	203 R	c£1m	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1255kg	769	3.0	-	217+	330	-		***
errari Enzo	203 R	'02-'04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.5	6.7	217+	545	-		****
errari F50	186 R	'96-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	3.9	-	202	-	-	+ A better drivers' Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though	****
errari F40	199 R	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	***
ford GT	200 R	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in	***
lennessey Venom GT	180 R	£900,000	8/7000	1244/6500	1155/4000	1244kg	1016	2.5	-	270	-	-		****
aguar XJ220	157R	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-		***
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-		****
oenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway	
(oenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 R	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg	797	2.8	-	250+	-			****
amborghini Huracán LP610-4	209 D	£186,760	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+	290	22.6		***
amborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7	-	202	325	16.0		***
amborghini LP570-4 Superleggera	152 R	10-113	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg	426	3.5	-	202	325			****
amborghini Gallardo	094 R	'06-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-		****
amborghini Gallardo Superleggera	104 R	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg	373	3.8	-	196	- 270	177	+ Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear	***
amborghini Aventador LP700-4	194 R	£260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9	-	217	370	17.7		****
amborghini Aventador LP750-4 SV	211 D	£321,723	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg	493	2.8	-	217+	370	17.7	+ More exciting than the standard Aventador - Inconsistent gearbox	***
amborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-		****
amborghini Murciélago LP640	093 R	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	211	-	21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	***
amborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 R	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-		***
amborghini Diablo 6.0	019 R	'00-'02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8	-	200+	-	-		***
exus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 R	'10-'12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-		****
Maserati MC12	079 R	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	- 275	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	***
IcLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2		***
AcLaren 675LT	213 R	£259,500	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	205	275	24.2		***
AcLaren 12C	187 R	71-74	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279			***
IcLaren P1	205 R	£866,000	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1395kg	658	2.8		217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track	****
McLaren F1	205 R	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	19.0	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another	***
fercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 R	£165,030	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	21.4		***
lercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 R	£229,985	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	196	321	20.6		***
fercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	073 R	'04-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	****
oble M600	186 R	c£200,000		650/6800	604/3800	1198kg	551	3.8	7.7	225	-	-		****
agani Huayra	185 R	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg	542	3.3	-	224	-	-		***
agani Zonda 760RS	170 R	£1.5m	12/7291	750/6300	575/4500	1210kg	630	3.3	-	217+	-	-	+ One of the most extreme Zondas ever - One of the last Zondas ever (probably)	***
agani Zonda S 7.3	096 R	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6	-	197	-	-	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	***
agani Zonda F	186 R	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6	-	214	-	-		***
agani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	'09-'10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485	3.4	-	217+	-	-		***
orsche 911 Turbo (991)	210 R	£120,598	6/3800	513/6000	524/2100	1595kg	327	3.4	-	195	227	29.1		***
orsche 911 Turbo S (991)	188 R	£142,120	6/3800	552/6500	553/2200	1605kg	349	3.1	-	197	227	29.1		***
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	140 R	'09-'13	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	319	3.2	7.3	193	272	24.4		***
orsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2)	204 R	'10-'13	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5	-	205	284	-		***
orsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	094 R	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	4.0	8.7	193	-	22.1		****
orsche 911 Turbo (996)	017 R	'00-'06	6/3600	414/6000	413/2700	1540kg	273	4.1	10.0	190	309	21.8		****
orsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	072 R	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	472/3500	1420kg	338	4.0	8.3	198	309	21.8		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 R	'95-'98	6/3600	402/5750	398/4500	1500kg	272	4.5	-	180	376	18.0		****
Porsche 911 GT2 (993)	003 R	'95-'98	6/3600	424/5750	398/4500	1295kg	333	4.4	-	183	368	18.3	+ Hairy-arsed homologation special; last 21 had 444bhp - Only 193 were made	****
Porsche 918 Spyder	200 R	£781,155	8/4593	875/8500	944/6600	1674kg	531	2.6	-	211	79	85.6		***
Porsche Carrera GT	200 R	'04-'06	10/5733	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	445	3.8	7.6	205	432	15.8		***
Ruf Rt 12	097 R	c£155,000	6/3746	641/7000	641/3500	1530kg	426	3.3	-	219	-	-	+ Beautifully executed car with truly immense power - Needs care	***
Ruf CTR3	126 R	c£357,000	6/3746	691/7600	656/4000	1400kg	501	3.2	-	235	-	-		****
			6/3366	469/5950	408/5100	1170kg	345	4.1		211	-			***

Track Times

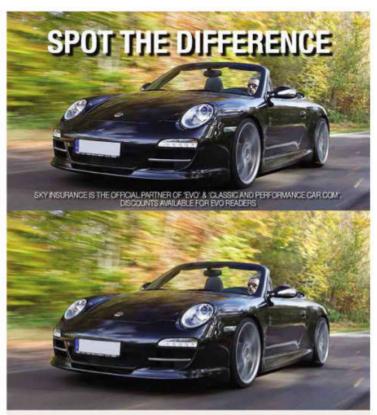


Car	Lap time	Peak mph	issue no.	Condition
Radical SR8LM (fastest car) Caparo T1 (fastest supercar)	1:13.6	127.8 130.9	138 131	Dry Dry
Ferrari 458 Italia	1:19.3	120.0	159	Dry
Gumpert Apollo S	1:19.4	120.4	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C (Corsa tyres)	1:19.6	121.2	159	Dry
Caterham Levante V8	1:19.6	118.6	131	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2 RS	1:19.9	122.3	158	Dry
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	1:20.1	113.2	138	Dry
Caterham Superlight R500	1:20.2	115.7	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C	1:20.6	120.9	159	Dry
Noble M600	1:20.8	121.8	159	Dry
Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4.0 (fastest coupe) Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	1:21.0 1:21.3	118.2 121.1	160 134	Dry
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	1:21.5	113.6	119	Dry Dry
KTM X-Bow (300bhp)	1:21.5	112.7	138	Dry
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	1:21.7	117.2	121	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS (3.8)	1:21.9	116.8	150	Dry
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	1:22.5	119.1	122	Dry
Brooke Double R	1:22.5	113.2	119	Dry
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	1:22.9	116.7	143	Dry
Porsche Carrera GT	1:23.3	115.2	119	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3	1:23.3	114.5	138	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo S	1:23.5	117.5	146	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2	1:23.5	115.1	119	Dry
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	1:23.6	113.1	119	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabrielet	1:23.6	112.5	182	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabriolet	1:23.9	112.3	183 VouTubo	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG Porsche 997 Turbo	1:23.9	113.5	YouTube 136	Dry
Lotus 340R (190bhp)	1:24.1	110.0	135	Damp
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:24.2	10.0	183	Dry Dry
Caterham Superlight R300	1:24.3	101.5	138	Dry
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	1:24.5	115.1	160	Dry
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:24.5	109.2	202	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	1:24.6	115.7	146	Dry
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	1:24.7	107.7	167	Dry
Caterham 7 Supersport	1:24.8	101.6	YouTube	Dry
Ferrari California	1:25.0	111.8	134	Dry
CTM X-Bow	1:25.0	105.0	123	Dry
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	1:25.1	109.1	162	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black	1:25.2	108.6	131	Dry
Jaguar F-type V8 S	1:25.2	111.2	183	Dry
Audi RS5	1:25.4	108.8	162	Dry
Audi R8 Spyder V8	1:25.5	107.0	167	Dry
Porsche Cayman R	1:25.5	106.8	158	Dry
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	1:25.6	109.1	183	Dry
BMW M5 (F10) (fastest saloon)	1:25.7	112.0	165 Var.Tuba	Dry
Jaguar XKR-S	1:25.7	-	YouTube	Dry
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	1:25.8 1:25.9	110.9 107.5	146 138	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400 BMW 1-series M Coupe	1:25.9	107.5	158	Dry Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360	1:26.1	106.6	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Trophy (fastest hot hatch)	1:26.1	105.3	166	Dry
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	1:26.2	106.3	202	Dry
Audi TT RS	1:26.3	107.2	149	Dry
Aston Martin DBS	1:26.4	109.5	143	Dry
Porsche Panamera Turbo	1:26.5	109.2	137	Dry
Audi RS6 Avant (C7) (fastest estate)	1:26.5	-	YouTube	Dry
BMW M135i	1:26.6	-	YouTube	Dry
Jaguar XJ220	1:26.7	111.7	131	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (fastest 4x4)	1:26.8	106.1	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	1:26.8	104.9	165	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	1:26.9	107.4	158	Dry
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	1:26.9	-	205	Dry
otus Evora	1:27.1	104.2	145	Dry
Vissan 370Z	1:27.1	104.0	158 VouTubo	Dry
laguar F-type V6 S	1:27.2	105.0	YouTube	Dry
Porsche Panamera S Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	1:27.3	102.4	165 YouTube	Dry Dry
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	1:27.7	111.0	162	Dry
Lotus Elise SC	1:27.7	104.6	131	Dry
Audi S3	1:27.7	-	YouTube	Dry
/auxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	1:27.8	106.1	131	Dry
BMW E46 M3 CSL	1:27.8	105.4	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	1:27.8	103.3	-	-
Audi RS6 Avant (C6) (fastest estate)	1:27.9	111.0	121	Dry
laguar XFR	1:27.9	108.1	137	Dry
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	1:28.0	=	YouTube	Dry
exus IS-F	1:28.1	106.4	151	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (987)	1:28.1	105.4	120	Dry
Subaru WRX STI	1:28.3	101.6	157	Dry
Porsche Macan S	1:28.3	-	205	Dry
SEAT Leon Cupra R	1:28.7	102.4	162	Dry
	1:29.2	105.8	149	Dry
		05.5		
Lotus Elise Club Racer	1:29.2	95.5	162	Dry
Bentley Continental Supersports Lotus Elise Club Racer Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup Vauxhall VXR8 Clubsport Tourer		95.5 101.4	162 156 YouTube	Dry Dry Dry

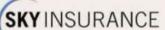


- Location Bedford Autodrome
- ➡ Length 1.85 miles (2.98 kilometres)
 ➡ Direction Anti-clockwise

Note: West Circuit reconfigured in May 2015. The above times are from before this date. Newer times are not comparable



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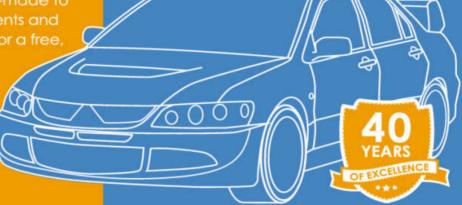
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Art of speed



Porsche Carrera GT centre-locking wheel nuts

by RICHARD LANE | PHOTOGRAPHY by DAVE SMITH

I REMEMBER MY FIRST CARRERA GT sighting like it was yesterday. Resting behind the convex glass facade of Porsche's flagship dealer in Stuttgart, the silver mass of adolescent want was enough to momentarily strangle my unbroken voice and deliver a near-lethal dose of adrenalin into my bloodstream. It was early 2004, so this would have been one of the first - possibly even the first - GT off the line.

I was stupefied. This was unexpected exotica so fresh the paint was still damp and so extreme that other cars in the showroom dissolved into nothingness. I can vividly recall the rifled exhaust tips, the distended abdomen, swollen with 5.7 litres of F1-derived V10, and the peculiar roofline. But as I gravitated to the window it was the ruby speck at the heart of each vast, Fuchs-inspired alloy wheel that leapt out. These, it turned out, were magnesium centre-locking nuts pinning the wheels on what may well go down as Porsche's finest road-going hour. Physically modest, they were thrust into relief by their understated surroundings.

I'd soon discover that the ruby roundels were complemented by topazcoloured pieces on the other side. Cool, I thought. Very. Cool. Except this being Porsche there was nothing so frivolous as 'cool' about it – the nuts

were different colours only because their heavy trapezoidal thread was designed to run contrary to the direction of travel for security. As such, a nut designed for the right-hand side of the car (in blue) wouldn't go on the left-hand side and vice versa. Colour-coding saved mechanics the expense of finding out they'd got it wrong with a 442lb ft torque gun.

The idea with centre-locking nuts, of course, is to facilitate lightspeed wheel changes in competition, so the Carrera GT's are technically fraudulent. But if you want to be a killjoy then you can also discount the kiln-dried ceramic clutch and floor-hinged aluminium pedals. And feel free to gloss over the fact that the car had a proper rolling chassis making it fully functional without its bodywork - never mind that it was built out of the stillborn Le Mans '9R3' prototype.

In any case, a reduction in unsprung and rotational mass is justification enough for these pretty nuts. If your name's Röhrl, that means a noticeable improvement in steering response and agility. For owners, meanwhile, it means a beautifully forged locking nut made of high-strength aluminium in the tool kit (one wonders how many of these have seen action) and the assurance that while some low-life might manage to make off with the entire car, they certainly won't be leaving it propped up on bricks.

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Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon ST CUPRA in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 32.1 (8.8) - 33.6 (8.4); extra-urban 50.4 (5.6) - 49.6 (6.6); combined 42.2 (6.7) - 42.8 (6.6). CO_2 emissions 157 - 154 g/km.